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365

Stories

Every day is a *special day* for
a *special story*.



inspiring, instructive, informative & interesting

365 Stories

Part - 3

*Every day is a special day for
a special story.*

Bait-ul-Ilm

An Important Request

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

To our respected readers

الحمد لله, we have finally completed this book and we would like you all to know that we have tried our best to print this book with correct references and without errors so that whatever is stated is authentic and referenced. However, to err is human, and so, should you find any mistake, room for further improvement or if you have any suggestions or comments, please write to us about it so that we can make sure that the next print is error free. الحمد لله, a lot of effort has gone into the editing and designing of this book and we hope that our readers will be happy with the result and pray for the acceptance of our endeavours.

جَزَاكَ اللهُ خَيْرًا

Waiting for your precious suggestions,

A courtesy of:

Bait-ul-Ilm Trust

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The Perfect Gift

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

What is the best gift that a Muslim can give to another Muslim?

Do you know that the best gift to give to your Muslim brethren is knowledge about religious affairs? If you feel, after reading this book, that it can benefit your family, friends, business relations, schools, colleges and others; then send them this book. This will ensure:

1. That you will be practicing the hadith - "تهادوا تحابوا" which means - "Exchanging gifts will increase mutual love".
2. That you will be investing in your hereafter as well as dispensing your duty to your Muslim brethren.
3. That you will get the blessings of promoting knowledge and religious information.

Therefore, try to make this book available to as many people as you can. Send a copy to your local Masjid, library, clinic and school to fulfil your religious duty.

A Word from the Publisher

Dear friends,

Allah تبارك وتعالى has informed us of the past nations, the good and the bad people. This has been done so that we know what is right and what is wrong, and this helps us be better people. The way good people lived and the blessings showered on them inspires us to do the same, while reading about the punishments on the sinners makes an intelligent person think and try to keep away from such deeds.

Therefore, reading about the incidents and stories from the lives of Prophets عليهم الصلاة والسلام and noble people influences us to perform good deeds. Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said that stories are an army from the armies of Allah تبارك وتعالى and that through these; Allah تبارك وتعالى gives peace of heart and steadfastness on faith.

Allah تبارك وتعالى says,

“We narrate to you all such stories from the events of the messengers as We strengthen your heart therewith.” (Hud: 120)

Rasulullah ﷺ has stressed on the education and upbringing of children. A few Hadith say the following:-

- 1- Teach your sons swimming.
- 2- Teach your subordinates Surah Yousuf.
- 3- Teach your children to read Salaat when they are seven years old.

There are numerous other Ahadith as well as stories from the life of Rasulullah ﷺ.

That place great importance on the education and upbringing of children.

Alhamdulillah, the Bait-ul-Ilm has published many books in Urdu and English like the Zouqo-Shouq Series, Storytime and Bedtime Stories. And now, dear friends, another series is here with a total of 365 stories so that you have at least one story or interesting read to satisfy your appetite every day.

You will read in these stories about the greatness of Allah ﷻ, the love for Rasulullah ﷺ, good manners, respect of parents and elders, firmness and courage. This book has stories, facts, jokes and quotes. I am grateful to Hafiz Muhammad Ahsan and Brother Asim Bharoocha, and I request you all to remember me and them in your prayers.

Yours sincerely

Muhammad Hanif Abdul Majeed

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Two Survivors, One Prayer

A voyaging ship was wrecked during a storm at sea and only two of the men on it were able to swim to a small, desert like island. The two survivors, not knowing what else to do, agreed, that they had no other recourse but to pray to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

However, to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island.

The first thing they prayed for was food.

The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruit. The other man's parcel of land remained barren.

After a week, the first man was lonely and he decided to pray for his son.

The next day, another ship was wrecked, and the only survivor was his son who swam to his side of the land. On the other side of the island, there was nothing.

Soon the first man prayed for a house, clothes, and more food.

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The next day, like magic, all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing.

Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his son could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man boarded the ship with his son and decided to leave the second man on the island.

He considered the other man unworthy to receive Allah's تبارك وتعالى blessings, since none of his prayers had been answered.

As the ship was about to leave, the first man heard a voice from sky booming, "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?"

"My blessings are mine alone, since I was the one who prayed for them," the first man answered. "His prayers were all unanswered and so he does not deserve anything."

"You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked him. "He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of My blessings."

"Tell me," the first man asked the voice, "What did he pray for that I should owe him anything?"

"He prayed that all your prayers be answered."

Rasulullah ﷺ said that the prayers most likely to be accepted are those that are asked in absence.

(Abu Dawood, Kita-us-Salat: 1312)



365 STORIES (PART-3)

Short Stories (Part-1)

The Man Who Stole a Snake

A thief once stole a snake from a snake-charmer, and in his folly counted it as a rich prize. The snake-charmer escaped from the bite of the snake; the man who had stolen his snake was killed by it most miserably. The snake-charmer saw him, and recognized him.

“Well, well,” he remarked. “My snake has robbed him of life. My soul was begging and beseeching God that I might find the thief and take my snake back from him. Thank be to God that my prayer was rejected. I supposed it to be a loss, and it turned out to be a gain.”

Remember that stealing is a sin, and we must only involve in things we can do and not poke our nose into others affairs.



Slave King

Nasiruddin was the slave of a king, and very fond of hunting. One day he came across a very pretty baby deer and picked it up and rode away. The mother deer saw Nasiruddin take her baby and followed him anxiously. Nasiruddin, pleased with the baby deer, was thinking about presenting it to his children to play with. After some time, he chanced to

365 STORIES (PART-3)

look back and saw the mother deer following him, her expression full of grief. He noticed too that she did not seem to care about her own safety. Feeling pity, Nasiruddin set the baby deer free. The mother deer nuzzled and licked her baby fondly and the two deer leapt happily away into the forest. But many times the mother deer looked back at Nasiruddin, as if to express her thanks.

That night Nasiruddin dreamt that the Rasulullah ﷺ was addressing him:

'Nasiruddin, your name has been entered in the list of Allah تبارك وتعالى, and you will one day have a kingdom. But remember that when you are king you will also have many responsibilities. Just as you have shown mercy to the deer today, you should be merciful to all Allah's تبارك وتعالى creatures. You should not forget your people by falling into a life of luxury.'

This dream came true and Nasiruddin did become king, Amir Nasiruddin Subaktagin, father of Sultan Ghysiasuddin Balban. Even you can become a famous and powerful person, but for that you too have to show compassion and mercy.



365 STORIES (PART-3)

Animal Facts

- A cow gives nearly 200,000 glasses of milk in her lifetime.
- Honeybees have hair on their eyes.
- A male rabbit is called a "buck" and a female rabbit is called a "doe".
- The waste produced by one chicken in its lifetime can supply enough electricity to run a 100-watt bulb for 5 hours.
- Scorpions can withstand 200 times more nuclear radiation than humans.
- It is possible to lead a cow upstairs, but not downstairs.
- A kangaroo can't jump unless its tail touches the ground.
- Dolphins don't automatically breathe; they have to tell themselves to do it.
- Cats sleep 16 to 18 hours per day.
- The poisonous arrow frog has enough poison to kill about 2,200 people.

365 STORIES (PART-3)

- The Queen termite can live up to 50 years and can have 30,000 children every day.
- The cockroach's favourite food is the glue on the back of stamps.
- An adult hippopotamus can bite a 12-feet (3.6m) long adult male crocodile in half.
- Termites are affected by music. They will eat your house twice as fast if you play loud music. Now we have one more reason why Islam stops us from music.
- A jellyfish is 95% water.
- A blue whale's heart only beats nine times per minute.
- A cat uses its whiskers to determine if a space is too small to squeeze through.
- A crocodile's tongue is attached to the roof of its mouth.
- A rhinoceros' horn is made of compacted hairs.
- A shark can detect one part of blood in 100 million parts of water.
- A starfish can turn its stomach inside out.
- A penguin is the only bird that can swim but can't fly.
- A lion's roar can be heard from five miles away.
- Emus and kangaroos can't walk backwards.



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The Genius Khalifa (Part-1)

Once two men came to a woman from Quraish and deposited two hundred gold coins (dinar) in her safe keeping and asked her, "Don't give it to any one of us until the other is present as well." After a year one of them came to her and asked for the money. She reminded him the condition but he said, "My companion had died and I want our money back." The women refused to accept this excuse but he kept on insisting and taunted her neighbours and relatives, who also pressurized her. At last she gave him their money.

After another year the other man came to her and asked for their money. She replied, "Your partner came and said that you had died. I have given him all the money." He reminded him the condition and took her to the court of Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه. After listening the whole story from both parties Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه immediately realized that the women was right in her case and the men are trying to deceive her. So he said to the man, "Is it true that none of you can take the money back alone?" He replied, "It is definitely true." "We got your money, bring your partner to take the money back," answered Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه.

(From: Heyratangez Waqiaat az afadat Mulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi)



365 STORIES (PART-3)

The Genius Khalifa (Part 2)

One day a person came to Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه. He was planning to ask him such a question that would take Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه a long time to answer and because of that his Maghrib Prayers would be delayed. He asked, "Ali, everyone says you are knowledgeable, then tell me which animals lay eggs and which animals give birth to their young ones"

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه looked back at him smiled and said, "The animals with their ears outside their body give birth to their young ones and the animals with their ears inside their body lay eggs."

(Makzan-e-Ikhlaq, pg 96)

Similarly another incident that took place is;

A person was about to die, and before dying he wrote his will, which went, as follows ...

"I have 17 camels, and I have three sons. Divide my camels in such a way that my eldest son gets half of them, the second one gets 1/3rd of the total and my youngest son gets 1/9th of the total number of camels"

After his death when the relatives read his will they got extremely perplexed and said to each other that how can we divide 17 camels like that.

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So after a long hard thought they decided that there was only one man in Arabia who could help them: "Ali Ibn Abi Taalib رضي الله عنه." So they all came to the door of Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه and put forward their problem.

Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه said, "Ok. I will divide the camels as per the man's will."

He said, "I will lend one of my camels to the total which makes it 18 ($17+1=18$), now lets divide as per his will"

The eldest gets $1/2$ of $18 = 9$

The second one gets $1/3$ of $18 = 6$

and the youngest gets $1/9$ of $18 = 2$

Now the total number of camels = 17

Then Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه said, "Now I will take my camel back"

This shows how genius Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه was in his time.

(From: Heyratangeez Waqiaat az afadat Mulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi)



365 STORIES (PART-3)

Great Quotes

- The noblest speech is the invocation of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
- The finest of the narratives is the Quran-e-Majid.
- The best of the affairs is that which has been firmly resolved upon.
- The worst of things is innovation in the religion.
- The best of the ways is the way of Prophet Muhammed ﷺ.
- The greatest blindness is going astray after guidance.
- The worst apology is that which is made at the point of death.
- The worst regret is that which will be felt on the Day of Ressurrection.
- One of the greatest sins is having a false tongue.
- The best provision is piety.
- The highest philosophy is the fear of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the Mighty.
- The best thing to be respected in the hearts is firm belief.
- The worst food to devour is the property of the orphan.

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- Blessed is he who receives admonition from others.
- He who represses anger, Allah تبارك وتعالى rewards him.
- He who is patient, Allah تبارك وتعالى doubles his patience.
- He who disobeys Allah تبارك وتعالى, Allah تبارك وتعالى punishes him.
- Wailing for the deceased is an act of ignorance.
- Evil poetry comes from the devil.



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Jokes for You

Teacher - Where is Himaliya?

Kid - Madam! I don't know.

Teacher - Don't know? Stand up on the desk.

Kid - I still can't see it.



Boy1: What is your baby brother's name?

Boy2: I don't know. He can't talk yet.



Girl1: "What did you get that little medal for?"

Girl2: "For speech and debate."

Girl1: "What did you get the big one for?"

Girl2: "For stopping to speak."



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Boy1: "What sort of a car has your dad got?"

Boy2: "I can't remember the name. I think it starts with T."

Boy1: "Really - Ours only starts with petrol."



Son: "Mom, teacher was asking me today, if I have any brothers or sisters who will be coming to school."

Mom: "That's nice of her to take such an interest in you. So what did she say when you told her that you're the only child, my dear?"

Son: "She just said... "Thank goodness!"



Father: "Son, why are you standing with your hands up?"

Son: "Because you told me to revise everything I did in school today!"



Early one morning, a lady went in to wake up her son.

Mom: "Wake up, son. It's time to go to school!"

Son: "But why Mom? I don't want to go."

Mom: "Give me two reasons why you don't want to go."

Son: "Well, the kids hate me for one, and the teachers hate me, too!"

Mom: "Oh, that's no reason not to go to school. Come on now and get ready."

365 STORIES (PART-3)

Son: "Give me two reasons why I should go to school."

Mom: "Well, for one, you're 52 years old. And for another, you're the Principal!"



Son: I had a tough day at the office.

Mom: At the office? (surprisingly).

Son: Yes, at the principal's office.



Teacher: Ahsan, make a sentence starting with the letter 'I'.

Ahsan: I is...

Teacher: No, no, no, don't say "I is", I only goes with am, say "I am".

Ahsan: OK, I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.



365 STORIES (PART-3)

Ayubia 1979

Ever been to Ayubia? Well it is situated at a distance from Murree in Pakistan. There is a hiking track there that overlooks a forest famous for housing tigers of which very few remain today.

It is the story of that forest way back in 1979. There was a sheep owned by a man who worked in a restaurant in Ayubia. One day, the sheep, not finding his owner, sensed that it had a chance of escaping and ran away. The man, whose name was Adeel Khan, was known by all the people who worked there. So when some of his friends and acquaintances saw his sheep running, they tried to chase it, only making it feel afraid so it sped away into the woods.

The forest in those days housed many tigers, and one of them saw the sheep. Now it was in real trouble. It was shaking with fear and when the tiger ran after it, it couldn't run faster and the tiger cornered it. The sheep had no where to run for in front of it was the tiger standing and at the back was a huge old tree.

The sheep knew its end was near so it said, "Please uncle tiger! Let me go, I am too small to satisfy your hunger." The tiger roared angrily, "You expect mercy from me, no way! The law of the jungle is never to show any mercy. I am going to eat you up!"

365 STORIES (PART-3)

As the tiger was getting ready to leap, the sheep prayed, "O Allah! Only You can save me now. I have realized that I don't belong to the jungle, You knew what is best for me, and now You have showed me that I am safe only in my owner's custody. I am not made for the jungle, please save me and I promise to return back to him!" Certainly only Allah ﷻ can save, He knows everything and listens to everyone's prayers so when the tiger was jumping, it slipped and hit the tree instead of the poor little sheep. The sheep saw the chance and ran away. As for the tiger, it crashed so hard into a huge old tree that it fell on the tiger, and it was stuck underneath the heavy weight.

The sheep went back to Adeel Khan after repenting. Adeel was a poor man and was very worried about losing his sheep, so when he saw it coming back he was overjoyed. Adeel thanked Allah ﷻ, but little did he know that the sheep was also doing the same.



365 STORIES (PART-3)

Smile Only! (Part-1)

Action

Trotting along on his donkey, Bhola was trying to eat some mulberry-flour. But each time he tried to empty some out of the bag into his mouth, the wind blew it away.

A passing farmer called out:

'What are you doing, Bhola?'

'At this rate,' said Bhola, 'I am not doing anything at all.'

The Courts Clean up

A dog had fouled the road between two houses. Each neighbour claimed that the other should clear it up.

Bhola was in court when the matter came before the summary judge.

This judge resented Bhola's claim to be an adjudicator in common law. The case was difficult, so he decided to take Bhola's advice.

'I will abide by your decision, Bhola,' he said, 'since this is a difficult case. You have the final word.'

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'My decision', Bhola immediately answered, 'is that since it is for the judiciary to clear up matters in dispute - you should clean it up.'

Get the Dates Right

A guide was taking a party round the British Museum.

'This sarcophagus is five thousand years old.'

A figure with a sombre face stepped forward.

'You are mistaken,' said Bhola, 'for it is five thousand and three years old.'

Everyone was impressed, and the guide was not pleased. They passed into another room.

'This vase', said the Guide, 'is two thousand five hundred years old.'

'Two thousand five hundred and three,' intoned Bhola.

'Now look here,' said the guide, 'how can you date things so precisely ? I don't care if you come from the East, people just don't know things like that.'

'Simple,' said Bhola. 'I was here three years ago. Then, you said the vase was two thousand five hundred years old.'

IS IT ME?

Bhola went into a bank with a cheque to be cashed.

'Can you identify yourself?' asked the clerk.

Bhola took out a mirror and peered into it.

'Yes, that's me all right,' he said.

365 STORIES (PART-3)

Smile only! (Part-2)

Right, Some of the Time

Bhola's clock was always wrong.

'Can't you do something about that clock, Bhola?' someone asked him.

'What?'

'Well, it is never accurate. Anything would be an improvement on that.'

Bhola hit it with a hammer. It stopped.

'You are right, you know,' he said, 'this really is an improvement.'

'I did not mean literally anything. How can it be better now than it was before?'

'Well, you see, before I made it stop it never showed the right time. Now it gives accurate time, at least twice a day, isn't it?'

Company Time

Hamza had taken up a job in a factory. The foreman saw him lay down his tools and start to walk towards the door.

365 STORIES (PART-3)

'What do you think you are doing?'

'I am going to have my hair cut.'

'You can't have your hair cut during this time!'

'But my hair grew during this time.'

'Not all of it, it didn't.'

'All right, then, I won't have all of it shaven.'

Questions Answered

Bhola opened a booth with a sign above it:

Two Questions On Any Subject Answered For Only 100 Silver Coins.

A man who had two very urgent questions handed over his money, saying:

"A hundred silver coins are rather expensive for two questions, isn't it?" "Yes," said Bhola, "and the next question, please?"

Bhola and the Blanket

Bhola was awakened one night by the cries of two quarreling men in front of his house. Wrapping his blanket tightly around his shoulders, he rushed outside to separate the men who had come to blows. But when he tried to reason with them, one of them snatched the blanket off his shoulders and ran away. Bhola, very weary and perplexed, returned to his house.

"What was the quarrel about?" his wife asked. "About our blanket," replied Bhola. "The blanket is gone, the quarrel is over."

365 STORIES (PART-3)

Beautiful Sayings of Rasulullah ﷺ

- "The best of you is he who learns the Qur'an and then teaches it."
(Bukhari, Fazail-ul-Quran; 4630)
- "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should either say something good or keep silent." (Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul-Birr; 1890)
- "Verily, anger corrupts faith just like the juice of bitter plants corrupts honey." (Shub-ul-Eman, Kitab Husn-ul-Khulk; 8065)
- Hadrat Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that encouraging good, prohibiting evil, lifting the burden of the weak person and removing an offensive thing from a path are all like prayers. (Al-Targib; 564)
- "A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim, he neither wrongs him nor does hand him over to one who does him wrong. If anyone fulfils his brother's needs, Allah تبارك وتعالى will fulfil his needs; if one relieves a Muslim of his troubles, Allah تبارك وتعالى will relieve his troubles on the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Mazaalim; 2262)
- Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "He who removes from a believer one of his difficulties in this world, Allah تبارك وتعالى will remove one of his troubles on the Day of Judgement; and

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he who finds relief for a hard-pressed person, Allah ﷻ will make things easy for him on the Day of Judgement; he who covers up (the faults) of a Muslim, Allah ﷻ will cover up (his faults) in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah ﷻ supports His slave as long as the slave is supportive of his brother; and he who treads the path in search of knowledge, Allah ﷻ makes that path easy, leading to Paradise; The people who assemble in a house from the houses of Allah ﷻ, reciting the Book of Allah ﷻ, learning it and teaching, there descends upon them the tranquillity, and mercy covers them, the angels flock around them, and Allah ﷻ mentions them in the presence of those near Him; and he who lags behind in doing good deeds, his high descent will not make him go ahead."

(Muslim, Kitab-uz-Zikr; 4867)

"It is (part) of the beauty of a man's Islam to leave what does not concern him." *(Muatta Malik, Kitab-ul-Jami'; 1402)*



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Salahuddin Ayyubi

Although he loved peace, Salahuddin Ayyubi became one of the world's greatest warriors. He was born in Tekrit in 1138 CE when his father Ameer Najmudin was the ruler of Tekrit. His noble father and talented uncle, Asad-ud-din Shirkhu, brought him up. Salahuddin was a very intelligent and noble person. He loved peace and never enjoyed fighting battles. But all changed when Salahuddin was ordered to go to Egypt with his uncle. He went to Egypt many times with his uncle to fight two enemies, the Franks and the Batnids. After his uncle's death, he became the commander and Vizier of Egypt. Salahuddin Ayyubi never lived in the palace. Instead, he lived in a small house near the Masjid. Salahuddin had a great love for Islam and as the Vizier and general of Egypt; he tried hard to root out the Crusaders. For this purpose, he maintained a strong army. He established peace and prosperity throughout the country. From the beginning, many prejudiced Egyptian ministers disliked him. When they saw he was winning the hearts of the Egyptian people they hatched many conspiracies against him but due to Salahuddin's wisdom, they were defeated. When the Fatmid ruler Al Aziz died, Salahuddin became the ruler of Egypt. When Salahuddin took over Damascus the people opened the gates of the city to him and greeted him warmly.

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The Crusaders were not happy with Salahuddin's increasing power and success. Uniting their forces, they planned a decisive attack on Muslim areas. The Battle of Hittin took place. The Muslims won under the leadership of Salahuddin. Thousands of Crusaders were arrested. Salahuddin treated the prisoners with tolerance.

In 1187 CE, Salahuddin conquered Jerusalem. Thousands of Crusaders were arrested. However, when their mothers, sisters, and wives appealed to Salahuddin, he released them. Many crusaders were ransomed. However, he paid for many of them. In addition, he provided them with transport, etc. He allowed neither massacre nor looting. He gave free pardon to all citizens. He even arranged for their travelling. He granted freedom to Christians to leave the city if they paid a small sum. Salahuddin paid it, himself, for about ten thousand poor people. His brother paid it for seven thousand people. Salahuddin also allocated one of the gates of the city for people who were too poor to pay anything that they leave from there for their homes.

On Friday 27th Rajab 583 AH, Salahuddin entered Jerusalem. After entering the city they went straight to the Masjid and cleaned it. Then for the first time in more than 80 years, the people of Jerusalem heard the Azan (call of prayer) from Al Aqsa Masjid.

(www.albalagh.net)



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Aurangzeb (Part 1)

Aurangzeb was the greatest King among the Mughals and ruled over the largest territory in India. His empire extended from Kabul in present Afghanistan to areas in South India bordering Madurai in the present Tamil Nadu State. He was a kind-hearted man and led a simple life. He was a just ruler and forgave his enemies. He abolished all non-Islamic practices at his court; abolished the Ilahi calendar introduced by Akbar and reinstated the Islamic lunar calendar. He enforced laws against gambling and drinking. He abolished taxes on commodities and inland transport duties. He forbade the practice of the Emperor being weighed in gold and silver on birthdays. Aurangzeb did not draw a salary from the state treasury but earned his own living by selling caps that he sewed and by selling copies of the Quran that he copied by hand.

Birth and Education

Mohyuddin Muhammad Aurangzeb was born on October 24, 1618 CE at Dohad in the Bombay Presidency. He was the third son of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. Aurangzeb was nine years old when his father became the Emperor of India. From that time on, his regular education began. He got a good education in religion as well as the ordinary education of that time. He memorized the whole Quran and was taught

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to write in a beautiful handwriting. He also developed a taste for poetry and could make verses. He also learned the Arabic language.

Military Training

His military training began by age 16. When Aurangzeb was seventeen, he was made the Viceroy of Deccan. Aurangzeb worked well as the Viceroy of Deccan. This didn't still bring peace to his mind. He wanted a purpose of life. After some thought, he turned to the Quran as a light for his life.

Life as a Faqir

In May 1644 CE, he gave up his duties as the Viceroy of Deccan and left to live in the wild region of Western Ghats. There he lived for several months as a Faqir (poor, simple man). He took up a life of prayer and self-discipline.

Anger of his Father

This action of Aurangzeb brought great anger to his father, the Emperor. He was so shocked that his son had become a Faqir that he stopped all his allowances and took his estates. This didn't bother Aurangzeb at first. After some thought though, Aurangzeb decided to go back to his family. For some months, Aurangzeb lived in Agra in disgrace. His mother and sisters felt sorry for him but the Emperor's displeasure was hard to go.

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Aurangzeb (Part 2)

Regaining his Rank

In November 1644 CE, his sister, Jahan Ara, who was the eldest and best-loved daughter of the Emperor, got a terrible burn and when she recovered, the Emperor, who was so happy, could not refuse her anything. At her request, Aurangzeb was raised back to his rank. The prince was again the Viceroy of Deccan.

End of Lawlessness in Gujrat

In February 1645 CE, Aurangzeb was made the Viceroy of Gujrat. For years, this province had been causing trouble for the Emperor. With a strong hand, Aurangzeb put an end to this lawlessness. The Emperor was pleased with his son and rewarded him well. Aurangzeb was put to the rank of a Mansabdar of 15,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 horses.

Division of Land by Emperor

The aged Emperor knew that his sons would fight for power after he died. This was the Mughal custom. Therefore, taking precaution, he divided his empire into four regions for each of them to rule. They all had their own government, army, etc. Dara was given governorship of Multan and Kabul in the extreme northwest. Shuja, the second son got

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Bengal the eastern most province. Aurangzeb was in Deccan in extreme south and Murad, the last son, had Gujrat in the west.

Arguments over Kingship

In early September 1657 CE, Shah Jahan fell ill. For a whole week, he was extremely ill. Rumours spread that the emperor had died. Dara began acting as if he was the emperor. Meanwhile, Shuja, who said that Dara had poisoned the Emperor, claimed himself to be the emperor. Murad too, crowned himself as Emperor and also stamped coins with his name. Both, Shuja and Murad wrote letters to Aurangzeb for support against Dara. Aurangzeb strongly advised them not to start a civil war because their father was still alive and improving in health.

Aurangzeb's Rule

After much fighting, the administration of the empire passed into the hands of Aurangzeb. The rest of his life was a struggle for Islam. He looked upon power as a means to reform a corrupt society. The pious Emperor did much to improve the life of the common people. He abolished all illegal taxes, etc. His measures brought relief to common men. He didn't seem to care about his own comfort. His reign was an era of happiness and peace throughout the empire. He never committed the slightest injustice during his reign. He was overall the best Mughal emperor in the history.

(www.albalagh.net)



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A Dead Child (Part 1)

Sheikh Maalik Bin Dinar رضي الله عنه was one of the renowned saints of his times. It is said that in his early life, he was not a pious man and when someone asked him how he came to repent and abandon his evil ways, he related the following story about himself:

“I was a policeman in my youth, and was fond of wine and would drink like a fish. I drank day and night and led a carefree life. I had a daughter, who was a lovely child, and I was very fond of her and she was also very fond of me. When this baby daughter began to walk and talk, I loved her all the more and she remained with me all the time. The innocent child had a strange habit. When she saw a glass of wine in my hands, she would snatch it away and spill it on my clothes. Being fond of her, I did not scold her. As fate would have it, my innocent child died when she was two years old and I was stunned with shock and bitter grief.

One night, the fifteenth of Sha’ban, I was dead drunk and went to sleep without performing my ‘Isha Salah. I had a most horrible dream, in which I saw that it was the Day of Resurrection, with men coming out of graves, and I was one of those who were being driven to the place of assembly (Maidan-e-Hashr). I heard the noise of something following me and, looking back, I saw a huge snake chasing me from close behind. Ah! It was the most horrible sight; the snake had blue catlike eyes, its mouth was wide open and it was rushing towards me, most furiously! I ran

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faster in terror, desperate for my life, the horrible snake still running after me and drawing closer. I saw an old man, dressed in elegant clothes. with rich perfumes wafting all around him.

I greeted him saying, 'Assalamu-o-Alaikum' and he returned my greetings. I said, "For the sake of Allah ﷻ, help me in my misery." He said, "I am too weak to help you against such a mighty foe; it is beyond my powers. But you must go on running; perhaps you may find some help to save you from it."

Running wildly I saw a cliff in front of me and climbed it, but on reaching its top, I saw beyond it, the raging Fire of Jahannam, with its most horrifying spectacles. I was so terrified by the snake that I ran on till I was afraid I would fall into Jahannam. Meanwhile, I heard a voice calling aloud, 'Get back, for you are not one of them (Jahannami)'. I came away and began to run in the opposite direction. The snake also turned around and came after me.

I saw again, the white-robed old man and said to him, "Old man, can't you save me from this python; I asked you before, but you did not help me". The man began to cry and said, "I am too weak to help you against such a mighty snake, but I can tell you that there is a hill nearby where they keep the 'sacred trusts' of the Muslims. If you go up that hill, you might find something of yours, kept in trust, which might save you from the snake." I rushed towards the hill, which was round in shape, with a large number of open curtained casements. The casements had golden shutters studded with rich rubies, and most precious jewels; on each shutter hung a curtain made of the rarest silk. When I was going to climb the hill, the angels called aloud, "Open the windows and raise the curtains and come out of your closets! Here is an unfortunate man in misery; may be you have with you some 'trust' of his that might help him in his distress."

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A Dead Child (Part 2)

Sheikh Maalik Bin Dinar 1 narrates further on what happened next:

“The windows opened at once, the curtains went up, and there issued forth from the casements a host of innocent children, with faces as bright as the full moon. By this time I was utterly despondent, for, the snake had drawn very close to me. Now the children called their friends, “Come out quickly all of you, for the snake has come very close to him.” Hearing this, more children came out of the windows, in large crowds, and among them I saw my own dear daughter who had died some time ago. She also recognized me and began to weep exclaiming, “By Allah تبارك وتعالى! He is my own dear father”. She jumped on a swinging cradle, which seemed to be made from heavenly light (Noor) and darted across to me. Next moment, she was standing by my side and I took her to my bosom; she lifted her left hand towards me and her right hand motioned the snake away. The snake went away immediately. Then she gave me a seat and sat in my lap and began to stroke my beard with her right hand saying, “My dear father,

“Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and

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for the truth that has descended (through revelation)? They must not be like those to whom the Book was given before, but a long period passed on them (in which they did not repent), therefore their hearts became hard, and (thus) many of them are sinners.” (Ch 57: 16 *Quran*)

I was moved to tears and asked her, “My daughter, do all of you know the meaning of Quran?” She replied, “We understand the Holy Quran even better than you.” I asked her, “My dear child, what was this snake?”

She said, “It was your own evil deeds which had made it so strong that it was about to push you into Jahannam.” I asked, “And who was that white-robed old man?” She replied, “They were your good deeds that could not help you against the snake (though he suggested to you a means of escape).”

I asked, “What are all of you doing on this hill?” She replied, “We are the children of Muslims who died in infancy. We shall live here till the Day of Resurrection, waiting to be reunited with you when you come to us at last and we shall intercede for you with our Lord.” And then I awoke from the dream with the fright (of the snake) still heavy on my heart. I turned to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in repentance as soon as I arose and abandoned my evil ways. (Fazail-e-Sadaqat; 557/2)



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Philosphy in a Jar

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks right to the top, rocks about 2 inches in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them in to the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The students laughed. He asked his students again if the jar was full. They agreed that yes, it was.

The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

“Now,” said the professor, “I want you to recognize that this is your life.

The rocks are the important things - your faith, your beliefs, your family, your partner, your health, and your children - anything that is so important to you that if it were lost, you would be nearly destroyed. The pebbles are the other things in life that matter, but on a smaller scale. The pebbles represent things like your job, your house, your car etc.

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The sand is everything else: the small stuff. If you put the sand or the pebbles into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks.

The same goes for your life.

If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, material things, you will never have room for the things that are truly most important. Pay attention to the things that are critical in your life.

Offer your salah and other faraiz, wajibat, other duties and responsibilities. Play with your siblings. Spend time with your parents. There will always be time to go to a friend etc.

“Take care of the rocks first - Pebbles and sand will make their own place.”



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Witty Responses

It is said that a beggar went to a rich man from Khurasan and asked for help.

He heard him say to his servant, "O Gold, say to Gem, to say to Jewel, to say to Sapphire, to say to this beggar that we do not have anything."

The beggar raised his hands to the sky and said, "O my Lord, say to Jibril عليه السلام, to say to Israfil عليه السلام, to say to Mikail عليه السلام, to say to `Izrail عليه السلام to take the soul of this miser."

Ash`ab was about to relate a story to a ruler and he began: "There was a man..."

But at that point he noticed a tray of food being brought to them. He paused as he was staring at the tasty food.

The ruler said, "Yes...and then?" Ash`ab said "And he died!"

He made the ruler laugh

Asma relates from his father that a prisoner was brought before `Abdul-Malik and was accused of having rebelled against the ruler. `Abdul-Malik said, "Strike his neck."

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The prisoner said, "O Leader of the believers, this should not be the reward that I receive from you. By Allah ﷻ, I did not join the ranks of such and such person except because I cared about you and was looking out for your best interests. I am an unlucky man, and I have never fought side by side with a man, except that he was defeated. Throughout the years, I have been better for you than 1000 people on your side who cared about you. I was with such and such person and he was defeated, and then I was with such and such person and he was defeated..." He went on mentioning the people who were defeated by `Abdul-Malik.

`Abdul-Malik laughed upon hearing this and freed the man.



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The Trader and the Parrot

A certain trader had a parrot that had a melodious voice and was very beautiful. Before the trader went on a journey to India, he asked all his servants, "What shall I bring for you from India?"

In this way he also inquired from the parrot as to what he shall bring for it from India. He asked the parrot if it wanted him to deliver a message to the parrots of India.

The parrot replied, "In India when you shall pass any meadow and see any group of parrots, give them my salaams and pass this message onto them, "A certain parrot longs to meet you. But through the decree of Allah ﷻ, he is a captive in a cage".

The parrot said further, "After passing my salaams to them, say: Is this acceptable to you that he should be restless in longing for you And that he should in this restless state come to the end of his life."

He also said, "And tell them: 'For how long is it going to be acceptable to you. That he should continue to be imprisoned while you can fly about in the greenery and from tree to tree? Is this the faithfulness of friends that he should remain a captive while you are free to roam among the gardens? The remembrance of friends by friends is a blessed thing especially when between them lays the relationship of Layla and Majnoon".

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When the trader passed, the message onto the parrots of India, they also gave him their regards. When one of the parrots heard the message, he started shaking and fell down from the branch of the tree and landed on the ground dead. The trader felt great grief that the parrot had died. He felt that if he did not pass on the message it would have been better.

After having seen to his business, he returned from India. He distributed the presents, which he had bought for the servants. Then the parrot asked him, "And what message did the parrots from the forests of India have for me? Whatever you have seen or heard, you should tell me."

The trader replied, "I passed your complaints onto your parrot friends who shared in your sorrows. But there was one parrot among them who was greatly affected, so much so that it could not bear it and started trembling and died."

When the parrot heard what happened to the one parrot, he also began trembling and fell down cold. When the trader saw this, he began crying: "Oh, what is this? What has happened?"

"Alas! O melodious voiced bird, "Alas! O my Companion, my Confidant!"

Thereafter when the trader imagined that the parrot had died of sorrow, he took it out of the cage and threw it outside. The parrot flew away and sat on a high branch of a tree. The trader looked up towards it and asked, "Tell me, what is all this? Explain to me the meaning of this."

The parrot replied, "That parrot through its action pretended to be dead and taught me a lesson, that my freedom and deliverance can be attained in this manner i.e. pretend to be a dead one." Then the parrot greeted the trader and said to him, "Farewell."

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Bitter or Sweet

This is a story of Imam Abu Hanifah رحمته الله تعالى. It was one afternoon. At this latter period of Imam Abu Hanifah's رحمته الله تعالى life; his body had become somewhat heavy, causing him some difficulty in moving around. Also, his house was situated on high ground, with a fair number of steps to climb to reach the entrance.

This particular afternoon Imam Abu Hanifah رحمته الله تعالى had just climbed up the steps and entered his house, and had just sat down with the intention of lying down to rest, when somebody called out to him from the bottom of the steps, "I wish to ask you some questions. Please come down." Imam Abu Hanifah رحمته الله تعالى came down and asked, "What is the question that you wish to know?"

The person replied, "Oh! Just as you reached the last two or three steps I forgot!"

Imam Abu Hanifah رحمته الله تعالى said, "It is of no consequence. When you remember, you may ask," and Imam-saheb went back up the stairs.

Just as Imam Sahib was about to lie down to rest, this person called out again, "I've remembered! Come down." Imam Sahib climbed down again. This time too, it was the same story.

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The person said, "I had remembered, but just as you reached the last step, I forgot!"

Sometimes it was the last step that Imam Sahib had reached, sometimes it was the third or fourth last step, but everytime it was the same story that he had remembered but had forgotten again! In this way he made Imam Sahib climb up and down six or seven times!

Then finally, when Imam Sahib had climbed down and enquired, "What is the question?" This person replied, "Yes! Yes! Now I remember!" Imam Sahib said, "Go ahead and ask."

The person asked, "What is the taste of faeces?"

Let us pause for a moment. He wanted to know what faeces tasted like! Is this a question to put to anybody? How much trouble and inconvenience did he not put Imam Sahib to, just to ask this?

However, with an even temperament, steadfastness, and firm stance, Imam Sahib responded very calmly, "It depends. What type of faeces are you enquiring about? The taste of fresh faeces, or the taste of stale faeces?"

The person said, "Well... Both! Tell me the taste of fresh faeces and stale faeces."

Imam Sahib answered, "The taste of fresh faeces is sweet, whereas the taste of stale faeces is bitter".

The person said, "What! Did you taste each of them?"

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Imam Sahib replied, "There is no necessity for one to taste each in order to determine these qualities. There are some signs and indications which will equally lead us to this conclusion. I have noticed that flies tend to settle on freshly-passed faeces. Flies are attracted by sweetness. So, one can conclude that freshly-passed faeces taste sweet. Flies do not settle on stale faeces. Bitterness repels flies. So, again, one can conclude that stale faeces are bitter!"

The person said, "What you have stated is absolutely correct!"

Imam Sahib, in turn, asked him, "Why do you say so?" The person explained, "I knew the answers beforehand!"

He explained further. "We were a few people sitting together, having a discussion, and the question came up: In this present age, who is a person with *hilm*?"

These people wanted to know who is the most accomplished in the quality of *hilm*, of selflessness, of giving sarifice, of undergoing personal inconvenience for the sake of others.

It was our unanimous opinion that it was Imam Abu Hanifah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. I came specifically to put you to the test, so that I could see for myself whether our unanimous opinion was correct or not!

(*Islahi Khutbaat, Gussa Na Kijyay; 272/8*)



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Careful Repenting

Imam SIRR al-Saqati narrates:

For thirty years I have been asking Allah's تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى forgiveness for an *Alhamdulillah* which I uttered with joy thirty years ago. When asked if it was a sin to praise and thank Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, SIRR al-Saqati explained:

In the Masjid of Baghdad, even as I was teaching the Prophetic Tradition, 'The one who does not feel troubled because of the troubles of Muslims', a man came rushing in and said that a great fire had broken out in the Baghdad market burning all the shops to ashes, but adding: 'Nothing has happened to your shop'. Glad that my shop had been saved from the fire, and not remembering that all the other shops had not, I happened to utter *Alhamdulillah*. That was clearly a selfish act. While the shops of all other people had burnt, I should not have been rejoicing over mine being saved. It is for that selfish act of mine that I have been asking Allah's تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى forgiveness for thirty years and praying to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى that He may not make me a selfish one.

SIRR al-Saqati continued to repent for that act until his death. Before he died, he asked to be buried in a solitary place no one knew of, and explained why:

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It sometimes happens that earth throws out the dead bodies of some sinful ones so that the living ones may take a lesson. If I am a selfish one who does not feel troubled because of the troubles of other Muslims, the earth may throw me out. So [bury me some unknown place so that] the people do not know me as one wicked and sinful to that degree.

(Tafsir-u-nisaburi, 35/1, Fatiha: 1)



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Great Upbringing

Qadi Shurayh was the chief judge in Kufa during and after the Caliphate of Hazrat 'Ali رضي الله عنه. Besides judging the cases referred to him, he also used to give advice on different matters to those who sought him for judgment. Once, a young man came to him for advice about his marriage.

Qadi Shurayh began his response by reporting to the young man the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, 'The home of a Muslim family is like Paradise.' Then, he warned him that in order that a home may be like Paradise, the members of the family should have received Islamic education. After that, he narrated to the young man an incident he recollected.

"I was passing by the tents of Banu Makhzum during my youth when I saw a girl and proposed her marriage. Her parent agreed and we married. But I was having second thoughts as she was the daughter of a nomadic family and I wondered if, having been brought up in a desert as a nomad, she might be uneducated and ill mannered. However, in the early days of our marriage, she told me.

Master! You are a very famous scholar and jurist, while I am the daughter of the chieftain of a nomadic tribe. You were expected to have married a girl fitted for you in nobility and education, while I was supposed to marry a nomad. However, destiny ordained that we should

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marry; it caused an unsophisticated, uncivilized nomadic girl like me to marry a man famous for his knowledge and nobility like you. It is my duty to make you happy as your wife, so teach me what your like and dislikes are and how I should behave towards your family and friends.'

I was disappointed and also ashamed of what I had thought of her. I responded to her that if she did as she promised, she would make me really happy.

My wife really did behave as she had promised. We were leading a very happy life when I saw a veiled woman at home one evening on my return there. She was my mother-in-law. I paid her great respect. She asked me whether I was happy with her daughter. I answered, "May Allah ﷻ be pleased with her and you. I have never seen her neglect her duties either towards me as a wife or toward Allah ﷻ as a servant."

My mother-in-law gave me the following unforgettable reply, "My son! I was certain you would be happy with my daughter, for I brought her up like in Paradise. We were living in a tent but our tent was like Paradise. Fear of Allah ﷻ, love of His Prophet ﷺ and zeal to live the religion prevailed there. Our tent resembled a school of Qur'an. We brought up our daughter according to Islam, for we believed that Islamic education was enough for one to be happy and make one's spouse happy.

After narrating this memory of his to the young man, Qadi Shurayh concluded, "Dear son! This is my story. That nomadic girl was not brought up in a city, but she received Islamic education. One can be happy only by means of Islamic education. I regard myself as one of the happiest of people on account of a nomadic girl who received Islamic education. If you marry, choose a girl who has received true Islamic education.

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Two True Stories

First story

In the years when news of Islam began to be heard within the frontiers of the Roman-Byzantine Empire, an exchange took place between Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, and Abu Sufyan, who was in Syria at that time heading a Makkan trade caravan. The Emperor asked, "Had Muhammad ﷺ ever claimed Prophethood before he began to call people to Islam?"

"No."

"Does he claim kingship or is there a king among his ancestors?"

"No, he does not claim kingship, nor is there a king among his ancestors."

"Have you ever heard him tell a lie?"

"No, we haven't."

"Who follow him the rich and the poor? Do leading figures of the society usually follow him?"

"The oppressed and the poor do."

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“By Allah تبارك وتعالى! He will be triumphant in his cause.

(Bukhari, Kitab: Bud-ul-wahi: 7/1, hadith No. 6)



Second story

During the Caliphate of Hazrat 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Jabala, the then chief of the tribe of Ghassan became a Muslim. Once during the pilgrimage, a poor and lowly man happened to tread on Jabala's foot by mistake in the crowd. Without giving the man a chance to apologize, Jabala slapped him on the face and kicked him. The poor man complained of this to 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who sent for Jabala. Jabala explained why he had beaten the poor man, “He got what he deserved. For, without considering his lowliness vis-a-vis my rank, he ventured to approach me and tread on my foot.

'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ asked, “How do you judge that you are so great that poor men cannot approach you?”

“I am the chief of the Ghassan tribe, descending from a noble family. I have great wealth and country-wide fame.”

“None of these reasons give you the right to slap that man and make out that you are so great that no one may approach you. In our Deen, the more pious and virtuous a man is, the nobler and greater he is. Everyone can be honourable and deserving respect according to his taqwa.”



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Short Stories (Part-2)

The Swallow, the Serpent, and the Court of Justice

A swallow, returning from abroad and especially fond of dwelling with men, built herself a nest in the wall of a Court of Justice and there hatched seven young birds. A serpent, gliding past the nest from its hole in the wall ate up the young unfledged nestlings. The swallow, finding her nest empty, lamented greatly and exclaimed, "Woe to me a stranger! That in this place, where all others' rights are protected, I alone should suffer wrong."

Every Tale is not to be Believed

A thief hired a room in a tavern and stayed a while in the hope of stealing something, which could enable him to pay his reckoning. When he had waited some days in vain, he saw the innkeeper dressed in a new and handsome coat and sitting before his door. The thief sat down beside him and talked with him. As the conversation began to flag, the thief yawned terribly and at the same time howled like a wolf. The innkeeper said, "Why do you howl so fearfully?"

"I will tell you," said the thief, "but first let me ask you to hold my clothes, or I shall tear them to pieces. I know not, sir, when I got this habit of yawning, nor whether these attacks of howling were inflicted on me as a judgment for my crimes, or for any other cause; but this I do know, that when I yawn for the third time, I actually turn into a wolf and attack men."

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With this speech he commenced a second fit of yawning and again howled like a wolf. The innkeeper, hearing his tale and believing what he had said, became greatly alarmed and rising from his seat attempted to run away. The thief laid hold of his coat and entreated him to stop, saying, "Please wait, sir, and hold my clothes, or I shall tear them to pieces in my fury, when I turn into a wolf." At the same moment he yawned the third time and set up a terrible howl. The innkeeper, frightened lest he should be attacked, left his new coat in the thief's hand and ran as fast as he could into the inn for safety. The thief made off with the coat and did not return again to the inn.

The Nightingale

A labour lay listening to a nightingale's song throughout the summer night. So pleased was he with it that the next night he set a trap for it and captured it.

"Now that I have caught thee," he cried, "thou shalt always sing to me."

"We nightingales never sing in a cage." said the bird.

"Then I'll eat thee." said the labour. "I have always heard people say that a nightingale on toast is dainty morsel."

"Nay, kill me not," said the nightingale; "but let me free, and I'll tell thee three things far better worth than my poor body." The labourer let him loose, and he flew up to a branch of a tree and said, "Never believe a captive's promise; that's one thing. Then again: Keep what you have. And third piece of advice is: Sorrow not over what is lost forever." Then the songbird flew away.

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There is as Much Malice in a wink as in a Word

A fox, running before the hounds, came across a woodcutter cutting an oak and begged him to show him a safe hiding-place. The woodcutter advised him to take shelter in his own hut, so the fox crept in and hid himself in a corner. The huntsman soon came up with his hounds and inquired of the woodcutter if he had seen the fox. He declared that he had not seen him, and yet pointed, all the time he was speaking, to the hut where the fox lay hidden. The huntsman took no notice of the signs, but believing his word, hastened forward in the chase. As soon as they were well away, the fox departed without taking any notice of the woodcutter: whereon he called and reproached him, saying, "You ungrateful fellow, you owe your life to me, and yet you leave me without a word of thanks."

The fox replied, "Indeed, I should have thanked you from the bottom of my heart if your deeds had been as good as your words, and if your hands had not been traitors to your speech."

Yield to all and you Will Soon have nothing to Yield.

In the old days, a middle-aged man had one wife who was old and one who was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like her. Now the man's hair were turning grey, which the young wife did not like, as it made him look too old to be her husband. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the elder wife saw her husband growing grey with great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his mother. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could. The consequence was the man soon found himself entirely bald.

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Plato's Words Full of Wisdom

- Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.
- Death is not the worst that can happen to men.
- Ignorance is the root and the stem of every evil.
- Laws are partly formed for the sake of good men, in order to instruct them how they may live on friendly terms with one another, and partly for the sake of those who refuse to be instructed, whose spirit cannot be subdued, or softened, or hindered from plunging into evil.
- Never discourage anyone... who continually makes progress, no matter how slow.
- We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.
- Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something.
- False words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil.
- He who is of calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition youth and age are equally a burden.
- Everything that deceives may be said to enchant.

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The Ass in the Tiger-Skin

A poor washer man had an old ass. He did not give it any food. The ass became thin and weak. The washer man had a wife and seven children.

He said, "I am working hard. But I am not earning a lot of money. I can't feed my wife and children well. How can I feed this donkey?"

Suddenly he remembered a tiger-skin in the house. It was a gift to his father's good work. He thought,

"I shall cover the ass with the skin and drive it into the field and won't go near it. My ass can eat a lot and will grow fat too."

The next day he dressed the donkey in the tiger-skin and drove it into the field.

The villagers saw the donkey in the tiger-skin. They thought, 'The tiger will kill us all. We shall write to the collector and he will shoot it with the help of the police.'

Many days passed. The ass ate a lot of crop everyday, and grew stout and strong. One day the villagers received a letter from the collector. He wrote in it, "I shall send you someone with a gun next week.

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He will shoot down the tiger. But my officers tell me that there is no tiger in your village or in any place near your village."

That evening all the villagers went to the field with big sticks. The washer man's donkey in the tiger-skin was in the field. Suddenly another donkey brayed from some places near the field. The washer man's donkey lifted up his head and brayed too.

The villagers saw this. They heard the donkey's voice in the field and beat him out. In a few days the washer man's donkey became thin without food and died.



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Hazrat Haritha رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ!

Do you remember that young lad?

For our Prophet ﷺ

He used to stand,

The symbol of Islam's glory

And its unity and strength

Do you know how he eternalized?

The will of his mother

Who sacrificed him?

For God's sake

How she longed that her son

Would stand for the right

And achieve martyrdom

For Islam's first win.

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In the battle of Badr
When the pagans
Thought they were
Riding high,
O! How he fought them
And attained paradise
His mother, the great lady
Heard the news that he died
She went straight to our Prophet ﷺ
And spoke about her choice.
She said, "O Allah's Apostle ﷺ!
You know how dear Haritha ﷺ
Is to me. If he is in paradise
I shall remain patient, and
Hope for reward from Allah ﷻ,
But if it is not so then you shall
See what shall be done by me!"
Now our Prophet ﷺ, he was moved

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He told her the truth,

“May Allah be merciful to you!

Have you lost your senses!”

And gave her the news that

Haritha رضي الله عنه had gone to heaven too!

O Haritha رضي الله عنه! You symbol of pride,

Success and glory of Islam

You did us proud long time ago

We are waiting for

One more to be born

(Hayat-us-Sahaba, Kitabul Ikhlāq: 9/1)



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The Blind Saint

Once a man saw the Holy Quran in the house of an old blind saint; he happened to stay as a guest in this blind saint's house during the summer. For a good while the two men lived pleasantly. After some time, however, he thought that the presence of this Holy Quran was very surprising because this man was completely blind and could not read it. He tried to comfort himself by thinking that someone else might be living there and reading the Quran, but when he gained certainty that this man lived alone and no one else lived there, his uneasiness and confusion increased.

Then he thought, 'I cannot be informal and ill mannered and just ask him the reason forthright, now what should I do?' Then he decided, 'No, I will not do anything. In fact I should stay quiet and adopt patience so that, through the blessings of patience I can get the answer.'

So he remained patient. For a few days, he remained in distress, but after a few more days, the secret was revealed to him; because patience is the source to success.

In the middle of the night he heard the recitation of the Holy Quran and due to this, he sat up. He saw the blind saint reading the Quran. His reading was perfectly accurate. From seeing this, he became

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overwhelmed and asked the blind saint, "Hazrat, what is the secret behind this? When there is no light in your eyes, then how can you see? How can you read like this? I have noticed that you point to the right words while making recitation. The movement of your finger shows that undoubtedly you can see each word of each verse.'

He replied, 'You are a saint with elevated ranks and you are separate from the ignorant ones; why are you surprised by the miracles of Allah تبارك وتعالى? I requested Allah تبارك وتعالى that I have extreme passion to read the Quran and it is dear to me as my life is dear. I am not Hafiz that I could read from my memory, so give my eyes light during the times I want to read the Quran so I don't have difficulty in reading. So, the response came from Haq Subhaana, 'You are a valuable man and in every distress you relied only on me for the solution and this is your good faith and high hope due to which I give you even more closeness to me in every way. In other words, I promise you that I will give you sight so that, Oh precious creation! You can read the Quran.'

Then, He did just that. Whenever I opened the Quran to read it, the Wise and most Respected Being Who has no partners, grants me vision."



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Definitions

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing from the middle.

BEAUTY PARLOUR: A place where women curl up and dye.

CANNIBAL: Someone who is fed up with people.

CHICKENS: The only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

GOSSIPER: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.

HANDKERCHIEF: Cold storage.

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MYTH: A female moth.

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MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN: Grape with sunburn.

SECRET: Something you tell one person at a time.

SKELETON: A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.

TOOTHACHE: The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labour saving devices of today.

YAWN: An honest opinion openly expressed.

WRINKLES: Something other people have. You have character lines.



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Short Stories (Part-3)

Quality is Better than Quantity

A vixen who was taking her babies out for an airing one balmy morning, came across a lioness, with her cub in arms.

"Why such airs, haughty dame, over one solitary cub?" sneered the Vixen. "Look at my healthy and numerous litter here, and imagine, if you are able, how a proud mother should feel." The Lioness gave her a squelching look, and lifting up her nose, walked away, saying calmly, "Yes, just look at that beautiful collection. What are they? Foxes! I've only one, but remember! that one is a Lion."

Old Friends Must not be Sacrificed for New Ones

A goatherd, driving his flock from their pasture in the evening found some wild goats mingled among them, and shut them up together with his own for the night. The next day it snowed very hard, so that he could not take the herd to their usual feeding places, but was obliged to keep them in the fold. He gave his own goats, just sufficient food to keep them alive, but fed the strangers more abundantly in the hope of enticing them to stay with him and of making them his own. When the thaw set in, he led them all out to feed, and the wild goats scampered away as fast as they could to the mountains. The goatherd scolded them for their

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ingratitude in leaving him, when during the storm he had taken more care of them than of his own herd. One of them, turning about, said to him, "That is the very reason why we are so cautious; for if you treated us better than the goats you have had so long, it is clear also that if others came after us, you would in the same manner prefer them over us."

False Confidence is the Forerunner of Misfortune

An ass and a cock were in a strawyard together when a lion, desperate in hunger, approached the spot. He was about to spring upon the ass, when the cock (to the sound of whose voice the lion, it is said, has a singular aversion) crowed loudly, and the lion fled away as fast as he could. The ass, observing his fear at the mere crowing of a cock summoned courage to attack him, and galloped after him for that purpose. He had run no long distance, when the lion, turning about, seized him and tore him to pieces.

An ounce of Prevention is worth a Pound of Cure

A muleteer set forth on a journey, driving before him an ass and a mule, both well laden. The ass, as long as he travelled along the plain, carried his load with ease, but when he began to ascend the steep path of the mountain, felt his load to be more than he could bear. He entreated his companion to relieve him of a small portion so that he might carry home the rest; but the mule paid no attention to the request. The ass shortly afterwards fell down dead under his burden. Not knowing what else to do in so wild a region, the muleteer placed upon the mule the load carried by the ass in addition to his own, and at the top of all placed the hide of the ass, after he had skinned him. The mule, groaning beneath his heavy burden, said to himself:

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"I am treated according to my deserts. If I had only been willing to assist the ass a little in his need, I should not now be bearing, together with his burden, himself as well."

He Who Shares the Prize Ought to Share the Danger

Two men were journeying together. One of them picked up an axe that lay upon the path, and said, "I have found an axe."

"Nay, my friend," replied the other, "do not say 'I,' but 'We' have found an axe." They had not gone far before they saw the owner of the axe pursuing them, and he who had picked up the axe said, "We are undone."

"Nay," replied the other, "keep to your first mode of speech, my friend; what you thought right then, think right now. Say 'I,' not 'We' are undone."



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A Nursery Rhyme

Free fat mice

Free fat mice

Take them free of cost

Take them free of cost.

You can cut them lose

On the bully guy

Who'll scream until-

His throat runs dry.

They are free fat mice.



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The Fruit of the Spirit: Patiences

Hazrat Luqman عليه السلام was a person whom Allah تبارك وتعالى had gifted with wisdom. He was a slave, but because of his piety Allah تبارك وتعالى gave him the option of choosing between prophethood and wisdom. He chose wisdom. During his life Hazrat Dawood عليه السلام was made prophet.

Hazrat Luqman عليه السلام, with sincerity, came to present himself at the service of Hazrat Dawood عليه السلام. He saw that Hazrat Dawood عليه السلام was making circles of steel and he was intertwining the circles into each other. Because Hazrat Luqman عليه السلام had never seen such craft before, he became surprised.

Different strange thoughts came into his mind. He thought to himself, 'I should ask what is going on here and what is being made by layering these steel circles on top of each other.' Then again he thought in his heart that it is not appropriate to ask and he should be patient, because patience pays in the end. The patient bird flies much faster than all the other birds and reaches its destination much faster than the other birds. And, 'If you ask', he thought, 'there will be delay in you reaching your goal'. With impatience, even the easiest of task gets difficult.

Then, while Hazrat Luqman عليه السلام remained silent, Hazrat Dawood عليه السلام finished his work. In front of patient Hazrat Luqman

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ﷺ, he wore the steel ensemble and said, 'During the time of war and competition, this outfit is best to save from injury.'

When Hazrat Luqman ﷺ got the result of his patience, he said, 'Indeed, patience is a good alternative, it is the cure of all kinds of agonies'.

(Al-Mustaqsi, Bab-ul-Hamaza; 63/1)



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The One-Armed Champion

In a small town of Korea lived a boy Hu Kin. He was a good little boy and was the best student of his class. But there was one problem he was born without the left arm.

This problem forced him from taking part in sports. But the boy was determined. He thought, "Maybe I can learn martial arts. I still have two legs and one arm."

He went to many martial arts academies, but they laughed at him and sent him back saying, "It is not a one-armed game, boy."

Hu Kin was still determined. Finally he came across an old martial arts teacher, Ju Han. Ju Han was old and wise. But his business was not doing well because everybody thought he was too old to teach or fight. He told Hu Kin that he would teach him martial arts in such a way that even the biggest and greatest champion will not be able to defeat him.

Hu was very happy. But soon he realised that his master Ju Han was only teaching him one move for the past two months. He asked, "Sensei, you have been teaching me only one move for the past two months. Am I not doing good to learn faster?"

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Ju Han replied politely, "No son. You are doing it in the best possible manner. All you need to do is learn this move, and the rest will be fine. And yes - - - I forgot to tell you, we will go and take part in the international martial arts championship."

Hu Kin was confused. But he had learnt to trust old Ju Han. So the next day Hu and Ju were there for the registration. At first they laughed at the idea of a little boy with one hand and an old master taking part in the competition, but then they registered Hu because they thought that some other people could gain easy points.

So the competition started. To everyone's surprise Hu Kin won all of his matches. He even reached the semi-finals. In the semi-finals he had to face an opponent much bigger than him, but after a tough fight he won.

In the final he had to face a very famous champion. The fight was very tough; after all Hu Kin was still a boy. But to everyone's surprise Hu defeated the big champion with the only move he had learnt.

Hu Kin and Ju Han were returning home happily to show the boy's parents the awards when Hu asked Ju, "Sensei, I don't believe that this happened but it has. The prize, gift, cup and certificate, all are here. Tell me how did it become possible for me to win the international martial arts championship with one hand?"

Ju Han replied, "You see Hu, you and the rest of the people looked at your disability. But God never leaves a person disabled without giving him help in some other way. Remember I only taught you one move, the rest was all defense. This is because the only move you learnt was enough."

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Because of that move the other person would have to grab your left arm to counter it. As you do not have a left arm, your disability becomes your advantage.”

Hu Kin had learnt not only how to fight and be good at martial arts; he had also learnt to not get depressed at the disability but to use it to his advantage. I hope you have learnt it too that if you are not good at something, you are good at something else. And you can always improve.



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English

Speak me my English I

Speak you not English my

No I don't tell any lie

Truth makes you want to cry

Steering car or stirring fry

You understand not more than I

No not why an eagle fly

I know knowledge more then thy.

No one no my English I

Speak you not English my

Sometimes I turn left and right

Speak me my English I.

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Short Stories (Part-4)

Keep Your Feet on the Ground

An astronomer used to go out at night to observe the stars. One evening, as he wandered through the suburbs with his whole attention fixed on the sky; he fell accidentally into a deep well. While he lamented and bewailed his sores and bruises, and cried loudly for help; a neighbour ran to the well, and learning what had happened said,

"Hark ye, old fellow, why, in striving to unravel what is in heaven, do you not manage to see what is on earth?"

Thy Pride is but the Beginning of Shame

A bald knight, who wore a wig, went out to hunt. A sudden puff of wind blew off his hat and wig, at which a loud laugh rang forth from his companions.

He pulled up his horse, and with great glee joined in the joke by saying, "What a marvel it is that hairs which are not mine should fly from me, when they have forsaken even the man on whose head they grew."

Misfortune Tests the Sincerity of Friends

Two men were travelling together, when a bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly onto a tree and concealed

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himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The bear soon left him, for it is said he does not touch a dead body. When he was quite gone, the other traveller descended from the tree, and jokingly inquired of his friend what it was the bear had whispered in his ear.

"He gave me this advice," his companion replied. "Never travel with a friend who deserts you in times of danger."

Each Member Must Work for the Whole Group

The members of the body rebelled against the belly, and said, "Why should we be perpetually engaged in administering to your wants, while you do nothing but take rest, and enjoy yourself in luxury and self-indulgence?" The members carried out their resolve and refused their assistance to the belly. The whole body quickly became quite weak, and the hands, feet, mouth, and eyes, when too late, repented for their folly.

Precautions are Useless after the Crisis

A singing bird was confined in a cage that hung outside a window, and had a way of singing at night when all other birds were asleep. One night a bat came and clung to the bars of the cage, and asked the bird why she was silent by day and sang only at night.

"I have a very good reason for doing so," said the bird. "It was once when I was singing in the daytime that a fowler was attracted by my voice, and set his nets for me and caught me.

Since then I have never sung except by night." But the bat replied, "It is no use, your doing that now when you are a prisoner. If only you had done so before you were caught, you might still have been free."

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Strange Facts

- Chewing gum while cutting onions can prevent having tears. Try it the next time you chop onions!
- Until babies are six months old, they can breathe and swallow at the same time. Indeed convenient!
- Offered a new pen to write with, 97% of all people will write their own name.
- Male mosquitoes are vegetarians. Only females bite. Ahem!
- The average person's field of vision encompasses a 200-degree wide angle.
- To find out if a watermelon is ripe, knock it, and if it sounds hollow then it is ripe.
- Canadians can send letters with personalized postage stamps showing their own photos on each stamp.
- Babies' eyes do not produce tears until the baby is approximately six to eight weeks old.
- It snowed in the Sahara Desert in February of 1979.

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- Plants watered with warm water grow larger and more quickly than plants watered with cold water.
- Wearing headphones for just an hour will increase the bacteria in your ear by 700 times.
- Grapes explode when you put them in the microwave. Hey don't try it!
- Those stars and colours you see when you rub your eyes are called phosphenes.
- Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing.
- Everyone's tongue print is different, like fingerprints.
- The colour blue can have a calming affect on people.



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Doctors Bhoola Demystifid

- When he says, "This should be taken care of right away."

He means "I'd planned a trip to Murree next month, but this is so easy and profitable that I want to fix it before it cures itself."

- When he says, "Well, what have we here...?"

He means, "He has no idea and is hoping you'll give him a clue."

- When he says, "Let me check your medical history."

He means "I want to see if you've paid your last bill before spending any more time with you."

- When he says, "We have some good news and some bad news."

He means, "The good news is, I'm going to buy that new car. The bad news is, you're going to pay for it."

- When he says, "Let's see how it develops."

He means, "Maybe in a few days it will grow into something that can be cured."

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- When he says, "Why don't we make another appointment later in the week."?

He means, "I'm going for a dinner tonight, and this a waste of time. I need money, so I'm charging you for another visit next week."

- When he says, "Let me schedule you for some tests."

He means, "I have a commission with the lab."

- When he says, "If it doesn't clear up in a week, give me a call."

He means, "I don't know what it is. Maybe it will go away by itself."

- When he says, "This may hurt a little."

He means, "Last week two patients fainted."



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About Suhayb Ar-rumi رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ

The Prophet ﷺ loved Hazrat Suhayb رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ a great deal. He was commended by the Prophet ﷺ and described as preceding the Byzantines in coming over to Islam. In addition to his piety and sobriety, Hazrat Suhayb رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ was also light-hearted at times and had a good sense of humour. One day the Prophet ﷺ saw him eating dates. He noticed that Hazrat Suhayb رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ had an infection in one eye. The Prophet ﷺ said to him laughingly, "Do you eat ripe dates while you have an infection in one eye?"

"O Prophet ﷺ! What's wrong with that?" replied Suhayb, "I am eating it with the other eye."

(Musnad-e-Buzzar, Musnad-e-Suhaib; 11/4)

Hazrat Suhayb رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ was also known for his generosity. In the period of the Caliphate, he used to give out away his stipend from the public treasury fi sabilillah, to help the poor and those in distress. He was a good example of the Qur'anic verse:

"He gives food for the love of Allah to the needy, the orphan and the captive." So generous was he that Hazrat 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ once remarked, "I have seen you giving out much food that you appear to be too extravagant."

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Hazrat Suhayb رضي الله عنه replied, "I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, 'The best of you is the one who gives out food.'"

(Mustadrak, Kitab-ul-Adab: 104/8 No# 7848)

His piety and his standing among Muslims was so high that he was selected by Hazrat 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه to lead the Muslims in the period between his death and the choosing of his successor.

As he lay dying after he was stabbed by a Magian, Abu Lu'lu', while leading the Fajr Salah, Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه summoned six of the companions: 'Uthman, 'Ali, Talhah, az-Zubayr, 'Abdur-Rahman ibn 'Awf, and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas رضي الله عنه. He did not appoint any one of them as his successor, because if he had done so according to one report "there would have been for a short time two Khalifahs looking at each other". He instructed the six to consult among themselves and with the Muslims for three days and choose a successor, and then he said, "Let Suhayb رضي الله عنه lead the people in Salah."

(Al-Istiab, Bab-us-Seen: 220/1)

In the period when there was no Khalifah, Suhayb رضي الله عنه was given the responsibility and the honour of leading the Salah and of being, in other words, the head of the Muslim community.

Hazrat Suhayb's رضي الله عنه appointment by Hazrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه, showed how well people from a wide variety of backgrounds were integrated and honored in the community of Islam. Once during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, a hypocrite named Qays ibn Mutatiah tried to pour scorn and disgrace on sections of the community. Qays had come upon a study circle in which were Salman al-Farsi (the Persian), Suhayb ar-Rumi (the Byzantine) and Bilal al-Habashi (the Abyssinian) رضي الله عنه, and remarked:

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"The Aws and the Khazraj have stood up in defense of this man (Muhammad ﷺ). And what are these people doing with him?"

Mu'adh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was furious and informed the Prophet ﷺ of what Qays had said. The Prophet ﷺ was very angry. He entered the masjid and the call to prayer was made, for this was the method of summoning the Muslims for an important announcement. He then stood up, praised and glorified Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and said:

"Your Lord is One. Your ancestor is one. Your religion is one. Take heed. Arabism is not conferred on you through your mother or father. It is through the tongue (i.e. the language of Arabic), so whoever speaks Arabic, he is an 'Arab."

(Kunzul Ummal, 428/13 No# 37131)



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Socrates' Words Full of Wisdom

- Death may be the greatest of all human blessings.
- Do not do to others what angers you if done to you by others.
- Envy is the ulcer of the soul.
- Get not your friends by bare compliments, but by giving them sensible tokens of your love.
- If a man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he employs it.
- Regard your good name as the richest jewel you can possibly be possessed of - for credit is like fire; when once you have kindled it you may easily preserve it, but if you once extinguish it, you will find it an arduous task to rekindle it again. The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.
- Remember that there is nothing stable in human affairs; therefore avoid undue elation in prosperity, or undue depression in adversity.
- Remember what is unbecoming to do is also unbecoming to speak of.
- Think not those faithful who praise all thy words and actions; but those who kindly reprove thy faults.
- Thou shouldst eat to live; not live to eat.
- The unexamined life is not worth living.

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Ahadith

"It is better to sit alone than in company with the bad; and it is better still to sit with the good than alone. It is better to speak to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; but silence is better than idle words."

(Mustadrak, Marifatus Sahabah, 5475)

"Verily, a man teaching his child manners is better than giving one bushel of grain in alms."(Tirmizi, Kitabul Birr, 1874)

"Keep yourselves far from envy; because it eats up and takes away good actions, like a fire eats up and burns wood."

(Abu Dawood, Kitabul Aadaab; 56/13:4257)

"No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that, what he desires for himself." (Bukhari, Al-Iman; 21/1:12)

"The three signs of hypocrite are when he talks, tells lies; when he gives a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he proves dishonest."(Bukhari, Al-Iman;32)

"The beauty of one's Islam is that he pays no heed to that, which is not his business." (Tirmidhi, Al-Zuhud; 2240)

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"Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy Deen." (Abu Dawood, Kitabul Aadaab; 4273)

"The worldly comforts are not for me. I am like a traveller, who takes a rest under a tree in the shade and then goes on his way."

(Musnad-e-Ahmed, 3525)

"If you do not feel ashamed of anything, then you can do whatever you like." (Bukhari, Kitabul Aadaab; 5655)

"O Lord, grant me Your love, grant me that I love those who love You; grant me, that I might do the deeds that win Your love. Make Your love dearer to me than the love of myself, my family and cold water."

(Tirmidhi, Al-Dawat: 3412)

"Say what is true, although it may be bitter and displeasing to people." (Ibne Hubban, Kitabul Birr:362)



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Strangest Man of All

I met a very strange man one day
He did what had never been done,
He spoke when he seemed to talk
And listened whatever he did hear.
And as for his name, it was strange
He called himself his father's son.
When he walked, his legs moved
When he slept his eyes were shut
When he knocked at, it made noise
As he swam he floated on the water.
And when he smiled his lips curled
And his laughter made funny sounds,
His crying brought tears in his eyes
His shouting brought out loud sounds.
So what to do with such a man strange?
Well just leave him - - - - on his own.

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The Day The Prophet Wept:

Before the time when the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ began to disseminate Allah's Word, there were many Arabs who preferred their sons over their daughters.

Sons were strong, they could work hard, bring great benefits to their parents and their family. While the daughters being girls were weak or so the Arabs thought. Not only that, girls were a nuisance and were a burden and an expense on a family.

Many Arab fathers had no emotions for girls and when a daughter was born to them they did not feel pleased at all. Some of them got very angry at the birth of a girl and buried them alive.

Fortunately, though not many Arab fathers were like the man who went to the Prophet and confessed to a truly terrible crime.

This father had once been an idol worshipper like all the Arabs before Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came among them and showed them the way of Islam. Before he became a Muslim, the Arab had a daughter, a sweet little girl. Whenever her father called, this little girl came running towards him always ready to show her love.

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One day the Arab called her and of course she ran to his side. He took her for a long walk and the girl skipped and hopped happily beside her father as they went along. The poor little thing never thought that a dreadful fate awaited her.

Before long the father and his daughter came to a well. Suddenly without warning he grabbed her lifted her up and threw her down the well. The little girl was dreadful frightened and cried out in terror shrieking,

"Daddy, Oh! Daddy."

But the father refused to listen to her pleas and her cries for help. Instead he threw a load of earth down the well to bury his daughter and then he went home and left her to die.

It was a heart wrenching story. The father was full of remorse and guilt for the dreadful murder he had committed. The girl's father would have to suffer his guilt for the rest of his life.

Naturally, the Prophet ﷺ was appalled when he heard what the father had done. His heart ached with sorrow.

Tears welled up in his eyes and spilled down his face and onto his beard. The Prophet ﷺ wept so much that his face and beard became very wet and the hair on his beard were all soaked with water.

When his friends saw the Prophet ﷺ weep like this they became very unhappy and felt their eyes too filled with tears.

(Sinani-e-darmi, Mukaddina, Hadith No: 2)

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All the same they knew it was right for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to shed so many tears for the poor little girl who had died such a terrible death.

For had he not taught his people, that they should love all children both boys and girls? Had he not said, 'Allah loves he who loves and looks after his family especially the girls.'

And was the Prophet ﷺ not the greatest friend, the children of the world could ever have?



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Your Prayer (Part 1)

He remembered his grandmother's warning about praying on time:

"My son, you should not delay your prayer".

His grandmother's age was 70 but whenever she heard the Aazan, she got up like an arrow and performed Salah.

He however could never win over his ego to get up and pray. Whatever he did, his Salah was always the last to be offered and he prayed it quickly to make it in on time.

Thinking of this, he got up and realized that there were only 15 minutes left before Salat-ul-Isha. He quickly made Wudhu and performed Salat-al Maghrib. While making Tasbih, he again remembered his grandmother and was embarrassed by how he had prayed. His grandmother prayed with such tranquility and peace. He began making dua and went down to make Sajdah and stayed like that for a while. He had been at school all day and was tired, so tired....

He awoke abruptly to the sound of noise and shouting. He was sweating profusely. He looked around. It was very crowded. He saw people coming from every direction. Some stood frozen, some were running left and right and some were on their knees with their heads in their hands just waiting. Sheer fear and apprehension filled him as he realized where he was. His heart was about to burst.

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It was the Day of Judgement.

When he was alive, he had heard many things about the questioning on the Day of Judgement, but that seemed so long ago.

Could this be something his mind made up? No, the wait and the fear were so great that he could not have imagined this. The interrogation was still going on. He began moving frantically from person to person to ask if his name had been called. No one could answer him.

All of a sudden his name was called and the crowd split into two and made a passageway for him. Two angels grabbed his arms and led him forward. He walked with unknowing eyes through the crowd. The angels brought him to the center and left him there. His head was bent down and his whole life was passing in front of his eyes like a movie.

He opened his eyes but saw only another world. The people were all helping others. He saw his father running from one lecture to the other, spending his wealth in the way of Islam. His mother invited guests to their house and one table was being set while the other was being cleared.

He pleaded his case, "I too was always on this path. I helped others. I spread the word of Allah. I performed my Salah. I fasted in the month of Ramadan. Whatever Allah ordered us to do, I did. Whatever he ordered us not to do, I did not." He began to cry and think about how much he loved Allah تبارك وتعالى.

He knew that whatever he had done in life would be less than what Allah deserved and his only protector was Allah. He was sweating like never before and was shaking all over. His eyes were fixed on the scale, waiting for the final decision.

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Your Prayer (Part 2)

At last, the decision was made. The two angels with sheets of papers in their hands turned to the crowd. His legs felt like they were going to collapse. He closed his eyes as they began to read the names of those people who were to enter Jahannam. His name was read first.

He fell on his knees and yelled that this couldn't be, "How could I go to Jahannam? I served others all my life. I spread the word of Allah to others".

His eyes were blurred and he was shaking with sweat. The two angels took him by the arms. As his feet dragged, they went through the crowd and advanced toward the blazing flames of Jahannam. He was yelling and wondered if there was any person who was going to help him. He was yelling of all the good deeds he had done, how he had helped his father, his fasts, prayers, the Qur'an that he read, he was asking if anyone would help him. The Jahannam angels continued to drag him. They had gotten closer to the Hellfire. He looked back and these were his last pleas.

Had not Rasulullah ﷺ said, "How clean would a person be who bathes in a river five times a day, so too does the Salah performed five times cleanse someone of their sins"?

(Bukhari, Mukit-ul-salah, Hadith No:497)

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He began yelling, "My prayers...my prayers...my prayers." The two angels did not stop, and they came to the edge of the abyss of Jahannam.

The flames of the fire were burning his face. He looked back one last time, but his eyes were dry of hope and he had nothing left in him. One of the angels pushed him in.

He found himself in the air and falling towards the flames. He had just fallen five or six feet when a hand grabbed him by the arm and pulled him back. He lifted his head and saw an old man with a fist white beard. He wiped dust off himself and asked him, "Who are you?"

The old man replied, "I am your prayers".

"Why are you so late? I was almost in the Fire! You rescued me at the last minute before I fell in". The old man smiled and shook his head,

"You always performed me at the last minute, have you forgotten?"

At that moment, he blinked and lifted his head from Sajdah. He was sweating. He listened to the voices coming from outside. He heard the adhan for Salat-ul Isha. He got up quickly and went to perform Wudhu.



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Think Twice

One night there was a woman at the airport who had to wait for several hours before catching her next flight. While she waited she bought a book and a pack of biscuits to spend the time. She looked for a place to sit and waited.

She was engrossed in her book, when suddenly she realized that there was a young lady sitting next to her who was stretching her hand, with no concern whatsoever, and grabbing the pack of cookies lying between them. She started to eat them one by one.

Not wanting to make a fuss about it she decided to ignore her. The woman, slightly bothered, ate the cookies and watched the clock, while the young and shameless thief of biscuits was also finishing them.

The woman started to get really angry at this point and thought, "If I wasn't such a good and educated person, I would have given this daring lady a black eye by now."

Every time she ate a biscuit, she had one too. The dialogue between their eyes continued and when only one biscuit was left, she wondered what she would do next. Softly and with a nervous smile, the young lady grabbed the last biscuit and divided it into two. She offered one half to the woman while she ate the other half.

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Briskly she took the biscuit and thought, "What an insolent lady! How uneducated! She didn't even thank me!" She had never met anybody so bold and was relieved to hear her flight announced. She grabbed her bags and went toward the boarding gate refusing to look back, where that insolent thief was seated.

After boarding the plane and nicely being seated, she looked for her book which was nearly finished by now. While looking into her bag she was totally surprised to find her pack of biscuits nearly intact.

"If my biscuits are here", she thought feeling terrible, "those others were hers and she tried to share them with me." Too late to apologize to the young lady, she realized with pain, that it was she who had been insolent, uneducated and a thief, not her.



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A physical and Spiritual Journey (Part 1)

One night Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sleeping near Ka'ba in Makkah when the Angel Jibreel came to him and nudged him with his foot. The Prophet sat up but did not see him, so he laid his head back down to sleep again thinking that perhaps it was only a dream. The Arch Angel again tried to wake the Prophet ﷺ from his deep sleep and after a third try the Prophet ﷺ actually stood up. The Angel Jibreel took his arm and led him to the Great Mosque. Waiting for him at the gate was a white beast that bore some resemblance to a gigantic horse. From its back sprang out two huge wings and each step the animal took, was farther than the distant horizon.

The Prophet ﷺ climbed onto the beast, which was called the Buraq, and the Angel Jibreel stood beside them pointing the way northward toward the city of Jerusalem. Within a twinkling of an eye they were at the old city and were met there by a group of prophets ﷺ: Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, and many others. Muhammad ﷺ dismounted the Buraq and led all the prophets ﷺ in prayer at the site of the Dome of the Rock. After the prayer, two vessels were brought before Muhammad ﷺ --one was filled with wine and the other with milk. Muhammad ﷺ only drank from the vessel containing milk.

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Jibreel then said, "Oh Muhammad ﷺ, you enjoy what is pure and keep away from what is impure. Surely you will guide your people to the path of Allah تبارك وتعالى."

Led by the Angel Jibreel, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ began his ascent through the seven heavens where he saw many other prophets. There was Musa, Ibrahim, Nuh عليه السلام and many others. Muhammad ﷺ also saw Yusuf عليه السلام and was awed by how handsome he was. When he ascended to the top of the Universe he saw a mighty Throne. The Buraq stopped and Muhammad ﷺ dismounted and found himself before a solitary Lote Tree. The Lote Tree marks the end of all earthly knowledge and beyond it no one knows what exists except Allah تبارك وتعالى.

Then Allah تبارك وتعالى showered a Divine Light upon the Lote Tree that was extremely bright, yet the Prophet ﷺ held his gaze on the tree and said, "I take refuge in the Light of your Grace--Oh Allah Almighty." At the Lote Tree Muhammad ﷺ received for Muslims the instructions for salah, the last section of Surah al-Baqarah and the command from Allah تبارك وتعالى that each Muslim should pray fifty times a day.



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A physical and Spiritual Journey (Part 2)

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was also shown the depths of Hell and saw many horrible things. He saw people that had their stomachs enlarged so big that they could not stand. As they lay on the ground suffering, the Prophet ﷺ was told that these were the people who kept orphans away from the property that was rightfully theirs and used it for themselves instead. The Prophet ﷺ also saw people that had two plates of meat before them. One had freshly cooked meat that was good to eat while the other had meat that was spoiled and stinking. These people were eating only the rotten meat. The Prophet ﷺ was told that they were the ones who used to eat haram. There was another set of people who tried to speak but every time they opened their mouths to do so, a sharp knife was there to cut their tongues out. The Prophet ﷺ was told that these were people who always spoke evil behind the backs of their fellow Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ then began his descent back to Earth. As he passed downward Musa ؑ stopped him and asked, "How many prayers have been laid down upon you?" "Fifty," Muhammad replied.

Musa ؑ then said, "The congregational prayer is a heavy weight and your people are weak. Return to your Lord and ask Him to lighten the load for you and your people." Muhammad ﷺ took the

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advice from his friend and went back to Allah ﷻ to ask for a reduction in the number of daily prayers. Allah ﷻ took away ten prayers and Muhammad ﷺ again began his descent to Earth. Musa ﷺ stopped the Prophet ﷺ again and told him that the number of prayers was still too much. Muhammad ﷺ returned to Allah ﷻ several times to get the number of prayers reduced until it was down to only five daily prayers. Musa ﷺ again said this was too much but Muhammad ﷺ said, "I have returned to my Lord so many times and asked Him so much that I am ashamed. I will not go again, but I have His assurance that whoever performs the five daily prayers will be given credit for fifty."

The Prophet ﷺ continued his descent from Heaven to Jerusalem. From there the Prophet ﷺ returned to Makkah. It was still night when he reached the place where he had been sleeping only a few hours before. The night journey to Jerusalem came to be called Al-Isra'a and Muhammad ﷺ's ascent into Heaven is known as Al-Mi'raj.

The next day Muhammad ﷺ went to the Mosque and began telling the people of his miraculous journey. The Muslims who were weak in faith doubted the Prophet ﷺ's word. They thought it was impossible for anyone to do all those things in one night. But sincere Muslims supported and defended him. One of the Prophet ﷺ's best friends was Abu Bakr ﷺ.

After hearing about the Prophet ﷺ's famous journey, Abu Bakr ﷺ said, "If Muhammad ﷺ says it then it must be true. Why should we doubt him? He tells me that the Quran comes from Heaven all the time and I know him to be speaking the truth. That is more than

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what you are questioning him about today." After the night journey the Prophet ﷺ had new strength and confidence. He was sure he could carry out his mission and guide people to the path of Islam. This was also the time that people in Medina heard about the new religion called Islam. They invited the Prophet ﷺ to their city and a few years later he made the Hijra to that city. The wonderful night of Isra'a and Mi'raj helped the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims to become stronger in their faith which enabled them to overcome the idol-worshipping Makkans.

(Tafsir Ibn-e-Kathir: 12/3 Al-Isra:1)

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Hakeem's Garden (Part 1)

Hakeem was a quiet man. He didn't talk much. He would always greet you with a *salam*, a big smile and a firm handshake. Even after living in our neighbourhood for over 50 years, no one could really say they knew him very well.

Before he became quite old, he used to take the bus to work each morning. The lone sight of him walking down the street often worried us. He had a slight limp, and had some health problems. Watching him, we would get worried that although he had remained fine in our neighbourhood so far; he may not make it through our changing uptown neighbourhood with its ever-increasing random violence, gangs, and drug activity.

When he saw the flyer at our local masjid asking for volunteers for caring for the gardens behind the masjid, he responded in his characteristically unassuming manner. Without fanfare, he just signed up. He was well into his 87th year when the very thing we had always feared finally happened.

He was just finishing his watering for the day when three gang members approached him. Ignoring their attempt to intimidate him, he simply asked, "Would you like a drink from the hose?"

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The tallest and toughest-looking of the three said, "Yeah, sure", with a malevolent little smile. As Hakeem offered the hose to him, the other two grabbed Hakeem's arm, throwing him down. As the hose snaked crazily over the ground, dousing everything in its way, Hakeem's assailants stole his retirement watch and his wallet, and then fled. Hakeem tried to get himself up, but he had been thrown down on his bad leg.

He lay there trying to gather himself as the Imam Saheb came running to help him. Although the Imam Saheb had witnessed the attack from his window, he couldn't get there fast enough to stop it.

"Hakeem, are you okay? Are you hurt?" the Imam kept asking as he helped Hakeem to his feet. Hakeem just passed a hand over his brow and sighed, shaking his head.

"Just some ignorant kids, I hope they'll wise-up someday." His wet clothes clung to his slight frame as he bent to pick up the hose. He adjusted the nozzle again and started to water.

Confused and a little concerned, the Imam asked, "Hakeem, what are you doing?"

"I've got to finish my watering. It's been very dry lately," came the calm reply. Satisfied that Hakeem really was all right, the Imam could only marvel. Hakeem was a man from a different time and place.

A few weeks later the three returned. Just as before their threat was unchallenged. Hakeem again offered them a drink from his hose. This time they didn't rob him. They wrenched the hose from his hand and drenched him head to foot in the icy water.

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When they had finished their humiliation of him, they sauntered off down the street, throwing catcalls and curses, falling over one another laughing at the hilarity of what they had just done. Hakeem just watched them. Then he turned toward the warmth giving sun, picked up his hose, and went on with his watering.



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Hakeem's Garden (Part 2)

The summer was quickly fading into fall. Hakeem was doing some tilling when he was startled by the sudden approach of someone behind him. He stumbled and fell into some evergreen branches. As he struggled to regain his footing, he turned to see the tall leader of his summer tormentors reaching down for him. He braced himself for the expected attack.

"Don't worry old man, I'm not gonna hurt you this time." The young man spoke softly, still offering the rough and scarred hand to Hakeem.

As he helped Hakeem get up, the man pulled a crumpled bag from his pocket and handed it to Hakeem.

"What's this?" Hakeem asked.

"It's your stuff," the man explained, "even the money in your wallet."

"I don't understand," Hakeem said. "Why would you help me now?"

The man shifted on his feet, seeming embarrassed and ill at ease.

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"I learned something from you", he said. "I ran with that gang and hurt people like you. We picked you because you were old and we knew we could do it. But every time we came and did something to you, instead of yelling and fighting back, you tried to give us a drink. You didn't hate us for hating you. You kept showing love and kindness against our hate."

He stopped for a moment.

"I couldn't sleep after we stole your stuff, so here it is back." He paused for another awkward moment, not knowing what more there was to say. "That bag's my way of saying thanks for straightening me out, I guess." And with that, he walked off down the street.

Hakeem looked down at the sack in his hands and gingerly opened it. He took out his retirement watch and put it back on his wrist.

He died one cold day after Eid that winter. Many people attended his *Janazah* (funeral) in spite of the weather. In particular the Imam noticed a tall young man that he didn't know sitting quietly in a distant corner of the masjid. The Imam spoke of Hakeem's garden as a lesson in life. In a voice made thick with unshed tears, he said, "Do your best and make your garden as beautiful as you can. We will never forget Hakeem and his garden."

The following spring another flyer went up. It read:

"Person needed to care for Hakeem's garden." The flyer went unnoticed by the busy people until one day when a knock was heard at the Imam's office door. Opening the door, the Imam saw a pair of scarred and rough hands holding the flyer.

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"I believe this is my job, if you'll have me," the young man said.

The Imam recognized him as the same young man who had returned the stolen watch and wallet to Hakeem. He knew that Hakeem's kindness had turned this man's life around. As the Imam handed him the keys to the garden shed, he said, "Yes, go take care of Hakeem's garden and honour him."

The man went to work and, over the next several years, he tended the flowers and vegetables just as Hakeem had done. During that time, he went to college, and became a prominent member of the community. But he never forgot his promise and kept the garden as beautiful as he thought Hakeem would have kept it.



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The Turner of Hearts

In the age of Sultans and Viziers there once lived a poor but pious Shaykh and a Vizier who feared Allah ﷻ. The fact that the Shaykh was poor did not concern him. He was satisfied with whatever Allah ﷻ sent his way.

The Shaykh was wise and knew that Allah rewards those who give charity in His Name -- a reward far greater than anyone can imagine. It was not the Shaykh's custom to ask anyone for help, but one day he really needed help so he decided to visit the Vizier and ask for his help.

Without hesitation the good hearted Vizier instructed his wakeel to give the Shaykh 50 dirhams, which was quite a lot of money in those days.

The next week the Shaykh needed more help so he went to visit the Vizier and asked his help once again. When the Vizier saw the Shaykh he was taken aback and exclaimed,

"Shaykh, I gave you 50 dirhams only last week!"

The Shaykh accepted the Vizier's decision and started to leave. As he left, it seemed to the Vizier that the Shaykh was muttering something disagreeable about him to himself, however, he could not hear exactly what he was saying and said,

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"Shaykh, aren't you ashamed to speak against me?"

The Shaykh was taken by surprise. It had not occurred to him that the Vizier should think that he would do such a thing and told him that it was not so, and that he was remembering Allah saying:

"O You, the Turner of hearts and eyes."

The Vizier felt ashamed of himself for thinking that the Shaykh would do such a thing and quickly called for his quill and paper. His assistant handed him the quill and paper and the Vizier started to write, "Give the Shaykh 50 dirhams," but instead of writing "dirhams" he wrote "dinars" -- which is a lot more money.

As the Shaykh thanked the Vizier he did not notice what was written on the paper and took the note to the wakeel for payment.

When the wakeel read the note both he and the Shaykh were surprised when he read aloud,

"Pay the Shaykh 50 dinars," so the wakeel asked the Shaykh what he had sold the Vizier. The Shaykh told him that he had not sold him anything and told him what had happened.

Now the wakeel thought he had better check with the Vizier before giving the Shaykh such a large amount of money, so he went to the Vizier to show him what he had written.

When the Vizier read the note he smiled and said, "His supplication has been answered by He who causes hearts and eyes to turn. The Turner of hearts has turned both the heart and pen; therefore give him the 50 dinars." (BY KHADIJAH STEPHENS)

365 STORIES (PART-3)

Poison for a Mother-In-law

A long time ago, a girl named Li-Li got married and went to live with her husband and mother-in-law. In a very short time, Li-Li found that she couldn't get along with her mother-in-law at all.

Their personalities were very different, and Li-Li was irritated by many of her mother-in-law's habits. In addition, she criticized Li-Li constantly.

Days passed days, and weeks passed. Li-Li and her mother-in-law never stopped arguing and fighting. But what made the situation even worse was that, according to ancient Chinese tradition, Li-Li had to bow to every wish of her mother-in-law.

All the anger and unhappiness in the house was causing the poor husband great distress.

Finally, Li-Li could not stand her mother-in-law's bad temper any longer so she decided to do something about it.

Li-Li went to see her father's good friend, Mr. Huang, who sold herbs. She told him the situation and asked if he would give her some poison so that she could solve the problem once and for all. Mr. Huang thought for a while, and finally said,

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"Li-Li, I will help you solve your problem, but you must listen to me and obey what I tell you."

Li-Li said, "Yes, Mr. Huang, I will do whatever you tell me to do."

Mr.Huang went into the back room, and returned in a few minutes with a package of herbs.

He told Li-Li,

"You can't use a quick-acting poison to get rid of your mother-in-law, because that would cause people to become suspicious. Therefore, I have given you a number of herbs that will slowly build up poison in her body. Every other day prepare some delicious meal and put a little of these herbs in her serving. Now, in order to make sure that nobody suspects you when she dies, you must be very careful to act very friendly towards her. Don't argue with her, obey her every wish, and treat her like a queen."

Li-Li was so happy. She thanked Mr. Huang and hurried home to start her plot of murdering her mother-in-law.

Weeks went by, and months went by, and every other day, Li-Li served the specially treated food to her mother-in-law. She remembered what Mr.Huang had said about avoiding suspicion, so she controlled her temper, obeyed her mother-in-law, and treated her like her own mother. After six months passed, the whole household had changed.

Li-Li had practiced controlling her temper so much that she found that she almost never got mad or upset. She hadn't had an argument in six months with her mother-in-law, who now seemed much kinder and easier to get along with.

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The mother-in-law's attitude toward Li-Li changed, and she began to love Li-Li like her own daughter. She kept telling friends and relatives that Li-Li was the best daughter-in-law one could ever find. Li-Li and her mother-in-law were now treating each other like a real mother and daughter.

Li-Li's husband was very happy to see what was happening.

One day, Li-Li came to see Mr. Huang and asked for his help again. She said,

"Dear Mr. Huang, please help me to keep the poison from killing my mother-in-law! She's changed into such a nice woman, and I love her like my own mother. I do not want her to die because of the poison I had been giving her."

Mr. Huang smiled and nodded his head. "Li-Li, there's nothing to worry about. I never gave you any poison. The herbs I gave you were vitamins to improve her health. The only poison was in your mind and your attitude towards her, but that has been all washed away by the love which you gave to her."



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I Believe in Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى

Once upon a time there lived a king who did not believe in God. The king had this feeling that God was not real and it was just an imaginary creation of human beings.

It so happened that the king lost his wife soon after the birth of a child. With the mother not being there, the king decided to shut the child up in a huge tall tower. He did not want the child to ever hear or think of God.

"If I lock him up in this big tower, he will never be able to hear about God," he thought.

Maids and tutors who were appointed to take care of the child were warned against mentioning the name of God to the young prince.

One day, when the king came to visit the prince as usual, he was surprised to see the boy standing before the window with head bowing down and looking out at all the beautiful flowers and colours from his window, at all the birds flying, the rivers passing by the place and the green forest beyond.

The king asked the prince as to what he was looking at. The boy said, "I am bowing to my Creator".

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Amazed by this, the king blurted out, "Which Creator? Who told you about Him?"

The boy replied, "No one ever told me about the Creator. I can see the beautiful world from my window. I can see the beauty of my Creator from all the nature that surrounds me. Someone must have created all these beautiful things. He must be Great. The very thought of his Greatness makes me bow my head before him."

The king slowly walked back, a defeated man. The little prince had learnt from the nature what he had wanted him never to learn. That God is real.



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Gossipmonger

A woman repeated a bit of gossip about a neighbour. Within a few days the whole community knew the story. The person it concerned was deeply hurt and offended.

Later the woman responsible for spreading the rumour learned that it was completely untrue. She was sorrowful and went to a wise old sage to find out what she could do to repair the damage.

"Go to the marketplace", he said, "and purchase a chicken, and have it killed. Then on your way home, pluck its feathers and drop them one by one along the road." Although, surprised by this advice, the woman did what she was told.

The next day the wise man said, "Now go and collect all those feathers you dropped yesterday and bring them back to me."

The woman followed the same road, but to her dismay, the wind had blown all the feathers away. After searching for hours, she returned with only three in her hand.

"You see," said the old sage, "it is easy to drop them, but it's impossible to get them back. So is the case with gossip. It doesn't take much to spread a rumour, but once you do, you can never completely undo the wrong."

Aminah Remembers Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى (Part 1)

Aminah looked forward to Fajr prayer every morning. She loved the fresh smell of dew that the morning brought. Everything is so fresh in the morning and the two rakat of Ishraq made her feel really close to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

But she always had one nagging question in her mind.

“How can I ensure that I remember Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى throughout the day?” she wondered.

So one day she decided to observe what her family did to remember Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

First, she watched her father carefully, to see what he did. She noticed that right after finishing his Fajr prayers he began to recite,

“Subhan'Allah, Subhan'Allah.”

And so Aminah repeated after him.

After filling her tummy with a hearty breakfast, Aminah began seeing what her grandma was doing after her meal, “Alhamdulillah”, said Grandma.

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"Why did you say that?" asked Aminah

"I am praising and thanking Allah for all the wonderful food He has given us," replied Grandma. "It means 'Praise be to Allah for His Greatness for giving us this food to make us strong'."

So Aminah lovingly repeated the zikr to praise Allah for the breakfast He had given them.

Later on, Aminah then sat down to finish her homework with her sister, A'isha.

Before beginning her homework A'isha said, "Bismillah" And encouraged Amina to do the same.

"Why?" Aminah asked.

"Well, it is so that we remember Allah before anything that we do - that we begin by mentioning Allah. So Allah may Bless us in the work that we are about to begin", replied A'isha.



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Aminah Remembers Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى (Part 2)

“Well then,” asked Aminah, “When do we say ‘A’udhubillah?”

“Whenever you have a bad thought in your mind”, jumped in Aminah’s elder brother, Rashid. “We say A’udhubillahi min ash-shaitan ar-rajeem to seek Allah’s protection from Shaitan, and from bad thoughts or actions.”

Aminah gave Rashid a grateful smile for teaching her a new dhikr to remember Allah with.

Later that day, after Jummah prayers for Asr, Aminah noticed that her grandpa repeatedly recited, “Astaghfirullah, Astaghfirullah.”

Curious to know why, Aminah asked, “Why do you say this dhikr grandpa?”

“Well,” replied grandpa, “I like to say *astaghfirullah* so that I will always seek forgiveness from Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.”

And so for the rest of the evening, Aminah rehearsed what she had learnt from watching her father, her grandma, her sister, her brother and her grandpa recite.

But as Maghrib drew near, she discovered two more useful azakar for her to recite to remind her of Allah.

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For Maghrib prayers, Aminah accompanied her father and their neighbour, Mr. Abdul Hamid, to the nearby masjid. As they walked to the masjid, Mr Hamid kept reciting, "La ilaha illAllah."

"What does it mean?" Aminah curiously asked him.

"*'La ilaha illallah'* means there is no god but Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى**", said Mr. Hamid. "As Muslims we believe that Allah is One and that He has no partners. This is the most important belief in Islam. Saying '*La ilaha illallah*' will remind us of this very important belief in Islam. So recite it regularly, Aminah", Mr Hamid told her.

Aminah thanked Mr Hamid for his advice and went with Aunty Fatimah to their home for salah. When she finished down, she saw Aunty Fatimah, making *Tasbeeh*. Aunty Fatimah kept on repeating, "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar"

"Why are you repeating '*Allahu Akbar*'?" asked Aminah

"I am saying 'God is Great'. I am praising and remembering Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى**," replied Aunty Fatimah.

Aminah thanked Aunty Fatimah, and then began reciting '*Allahu Akbar*', praising and remembering Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى**.

In her heart, Aminah gave a silent thanks to Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى** for helping her learn the many ways that she could bring herself closer to Him.

She decided firmly in her heart to repeat whatever zikr she had learnt, everyday, starting with today, Insha'Allah. Aminah will become closer to Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى**, and remember Him often and make the intention to never forget Him.

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The Dairy Maid

When Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه was the Caliph, the Commander of the Faithful, he often went out to check on the people.

One day he went out on foot with his servant. After a while they felt tired, so they stopped to rest by a house.

They heard the voice of an old woman inside the house ordering her daughter to mix water with milk. The daughter refused to do so and said to her mother,

“The Commander of the Faithful ordered people not to mix water with milk. He sent a man to inform people of this on the streets.”

However, the mother insisted that the daughter dilute the milk and said, “Where is Umar رضي الله عنه now? He does not see us.”

The faithful, honest daughter said,

“Should we obey the Commander of the Faithful in front of people and disobey him in secret?”

Umar رضي الله عنه was pleased to hear this, and he admired the honesty and faith of this young woman. In the morning, he inquired

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about her and learned that she was Umm Imara, Bint Sufyan Ibn Abdullah Al-Thakafay. Umar رضي الله عنه also learned that she was unmarried, so he married her to his son Asim.

Allah blessed the young couple and their offspring, one of whom was the just caliph Umar Ibn Abdul-Aziz رضي الله عنه.



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The Three Dates

A'isha رضي الله عنها, the Blessed Prophet's ﷺ wife, was a hospitable and generous person. She loved to entertain guests and spend happy hours chatting to them.

Once, a woman came to visit A'isha رضي الله عنها, bringing her two daughters with her. A'isha رضي الله عنها received her, smiling and welcoming, and very soon, the two women were deep in conversation.

However, A'isha رضي الله عنها was faced with a certain difficulty. She wanted to entertain her guest, but at that time, things were very hard in Madinah. Often, the people went hungry, and in the Blessed Prophet ﷺ's house, no food had been cooked since days. It was difficult to come across the simplest food, and even dates were in short supply.

A'isha رضي الله عنها decided that she must search the house thoroughly in the hope of finding something to offer her guest. The room in which she had welcomed her guest was so small that when A'isha رضي الله عنها stood up, her head almost touched the ceiling.

It did not take A'isha رضي الله عنها very long to search it, and she quickly realised that she did not have very much to offer her guest. Eventually though, she managed to find three dates. A'isha رضي الله عنها gave them to her guest, who looked at her very gratefully.

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The woman gave one date to each of her daughters, and the girls grabbed them eagerly. They were very hungry and did not have anything to eat for several days. Their mother kept one date for herself, but she did not eat it. Instead, she held it in her hand while she went on talking to A'isha رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا.

Because they were hungry, the two little girls gobbled up their dates very quickly. When they had finished, they began to eye the last date, the one which their mother held in her hand.

Their mother saw them out of the corner of her eye, and she smiled. She knew exactly what they wanted, and what she must do. So, she divided the last date into two pieces and gave half to each of the girls.

A'isha رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was moved by the great love and self-sacrifice shown by this mother, and as soon as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ came home, she told him what had happened.

"Indeed", the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said.

"The woman has entered Paradise because of the love and kindness she showed to her little daughters. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will show her mercy because she showed mercy to them."

(Bukhari, Kitabuz Zakat: 1329)



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The Boy and the Dog

Once, Abdullah Bin Jafar رضي الله عنه was passing through a forest when he went by an orchard where an Abyssinian (Ethiopian) slave was working.

Someone brought him his food and, at the same time, a stray dog came into the garden, and stood by the slave who threw a loaf of bread to the dog, which it ate but did not go away.

The slave-boy understood the dog's hunger and used to give it every second bite of his share.

Abdullah bin Jafar رضي الله عنه, who had been watching this, said to the boy, "How much bread do you get as your daily ration of food?"

The boy said, "I get three loaves everyday, as you have just seen."

Ibn Jafar رضي الله عنه asked, "Then, why did you prefer a dog to yourself and feed it all the three loaves?"

The boy said, "There are no dogs living round here. The poor creature must have travelled a long distance to reach here and it must be feeling very hungry. So, I felt ashamed to send it away, without serving it any food."

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Ibn Jafar رضي الله عنه said, "What will you have for food today?"

The boy said, "I shall go without food for a day, which I don't mind."

Ibn Jafar رضي الله عنه said to himself, "People praise you for spending too liberally, but this slave-boy is far more generous than you."

After this he came back to the town and, after purchasing the slave-boy, the garden and all the other effects therein from the owner, he set free the slave-boy and gave him the garden as a gift.

(Fazail-e-Sadaqat: 508/6)



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A Leper, a Blindman and a Bald Man

Allah ﷻ intended to test three people of Bani Israeel who were a leper, a blindman and a bald-headed man.

So, he sent them an angel who came to the leper and said, 'What thing, do you like the most?'

He replied, "Good colour and good skin, for the people have a strong aversion to me.' The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given a good colour and beautiful skin.

The angel asked him, 'What kind of property do you like best?'

He replied, 'Camels.'

So he (i.e. the leper) was given a pregnant she- camel, and the angel said (to him), 'May Allah ﷻ bless you in it.'

The angel then went to the bald-headed man and said, 'What thing do you like the most?'

He said, 'I like good hair and wish to be cured of this disease, for the people feel repulsion for me.'

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The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given good hair.

The angel asked (him), 'What kind of property do you like best?'

He replied, 'Cows,' The angel gave him a pregnant cow and said, 'May Allah تبارك وتعالى bless you in it.'

The angel went to the blindman and asked, 'What thing do you like best?' He said, '(I like) that Allah تبارك وتعالى may restore my eye-sight to me so that I may see the people.' The angel touched his eyes and Allah تبارك وتعالى gave him back his eye-sight.

The angel asked him, 'What kind of property do you like best?'

He replied, 'Sheep.' The angel gave him a pregnant sheep.

Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones, and multiplied and brought forth so much that one of the (three) men had a herd of camels filling a valley, and one had a herd of cows filling a valley, and one had a flock of sheep filling a valley.

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a leper, went to the leper and said, "I am a poor man, who has lost all means of livelihood while on a journey. So none will satisfy my need except Allah تبارك وتعالى and then you. In the Name of Him Who has given you such nice colour and beautiful skin, and so much property, I ask you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination. The man replied, 'I have many obligations (so I cannot give you).'

The angel said, 'I think I know you; were you not a leper to whom the people had a strong aversion? Weren't you a poor man, and then Allah gave you (all this property).'

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He replied, '(This is all wrong), I got this property through inheritance from my fore-fathers'

The angel said, 'If you are telling a lie, then let Allah ﷻ make you as you were before.'

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a bald man, went to the bald man and said to him the same as he told the first one, and he too answered the same as the first one did.

The angel said, 'If you are telling a lie, then let Allah ﷻ make you as you were before.'

The angel, disguised in the shape of a blindman, went to the blindman and said, 'I am a poor man and a traveller, whose means of livelihood have been exhausted while on a journey. I have nobody to help me except Allah ﷻ, and after Him, you yourself. I ask you in the Name of Him Who has given you back your eye-sight to give me a sheep, so that with its help, I may complete my journey.'

The man said, 'No doubt, I was blind and Allah gave me back my eye-sight; I was poor and Allah made me rich; so take anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop you for taking anything (you need) of my property which you may take for Allah's sake.'

The angel replied, 'Keep your property with you. You (i.e. 3 men) have been tested and Allah is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions.'

(Bukhari, Ahadis-ul-Anbiah: 3205)



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The Angry Woman

It was the month of Ramadan, when all good Muslims were trying very hard to keep the fast. This meant that they did not eat anything during the hours of daylight. From sunrise to sunset no food or drink must pass their lips, they should be good and try and read more Qur'an-e-Majid than other months, and become better Muslims.

Fasting is difficult, especially when it is a hot day. It was on such a hot day that a pious man sat down to rest. He had not eaten since it was dark, and the sun was now high in the sky. He wanted a few moments of peace.

He had only been sitting down for a few moments when the peace was broken.

Someone was shouting loudly, down the street in his vicinity. A woman was obviously very angry. Her voice was loud, and the angrier she became the louder and shriller her shouting became.

The man decided to investigate.

As he came closer, he saw one of the richest women in the town, berating a servant for something he should have done, but had not. She was furious! Her face was red with anger, she was shaking her fist, and it seemed as if she was fit to burst.

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The servant was standing uncomfortably, his head bowed low, not daring to move or reply. The woman was so busy with her anger that at first she did not notice the pious man standing beside her.

Slowly she became aware that someone was standing beside her. She turned, saw that it was the pious man, and calmed down a little. He told her, "Why don't you go indoors, and have something to eat?"

The woman was shocked. She did not know what to say. She always kept the fast. She wondered if the man realised what he was saying.

"But I always keep the fast," she said. "I have not eaten anything today."

The pious man spoke in a serious tone, "If you were keeping the fast properly," he said, "you would be kind to others. You would be trying hard to follow Allah's ﷻ will. Getting angry with your servant is as bad as eating during the fast. You might as well go and eat."



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Wisdom behind Everything

A story is told about a king in Africa who had a close friend that he grew up with. The friend had a habit of looking at every situation that ever occurred in his life (positive or negative) by remarking, "This is good".

One day the king and his friend were out on a hunting expedition. The friend would load and prepare the guns for the king. The friend had apparently done something wrong in preparing one of the guns, for after taking the gun from his friend, the king fired it and his thumb was blown off. Examining the situation the friend remarked as usual,

"This is good!" To which the king replied, "No, this is not good!" and ordered his soldiers to put his friend into jail.

About a year later, the king was hunting in an area that he should have known to stay clear of. Cannibals captured the king and took him to their village. They tied his hands, stacked some wood, set up a stake and bound him to the stake. As they came near to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. Being superstitious, they never ate anyone who was less than whole. So after untying the king, they chased him out of the village.

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When the king reached his palace, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb and felt remorse for his treatment of his friend. He went immediately to the jail to speak with his friend.

"You were right" the king said, "It was good that my thumb was blown off." And he proceeded to tell the friend all that had just happened.

"I am very sorry for sending you to jail for so long. It was bad for me to do this."

"No," his friend replied, "This is good!"

"What do you mean, 'This is good'? How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?"

The king's friend replied: "If I had not been in jail, I would have been with you."

There is always a good reason behind everything good or bad that happens, it is just that we are not always able to understand the wisdom of Allah ﷻ.



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Pearls of Wisdom

- "Be grateful to the one who points out your defects." (*Sayyidna Umar* رضي الله عنه)
- "He who mixes with people and endures their harm is better than he who does not mix and endure." (Tirmidhi, *Sifatul Qiamah*: 2431)
- "The most perfect amongst the believers in faith is the one who has the best manners; and the best of you are those who are best to their wives." (Tirmidhi, *Kitabul Rizae'*: 1082)
- "Accept Islam and you will be saved." (Bukhari, *kitabul Wahi*: 6)
- "He who had three daughters or three sisters, or two daughters or two sisters and he treated them well, and feared Allah in dealing with them, for him is Paradise. (Tirmidhi, *Kitabul Birr*: 1832)
- "Most of the sins that the son of Adam commits are by his tongue."
(*Al-Targhib, Kitabul Aadaab*: 4410)
- "A man slips more by his tongue than by his foot." (Bayhaqi)
- "How can you rejoice about this life that grows shorter each hour." (*Sayyidna Ali*, رضي الله عنه)

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- "A Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field, from which men, birds and animals can eat, is committing an act of charity."
(Muslim, Kitabul Musakat: 2904)
- "There is a polish for everything that takes away rust; and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of Allah."
(Al-Targhib, Kitabuz Zikr: 3303)
- "What actions are most beloved? They are: to gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, and to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful." (Al-Targhib, Kitabul Aadaab: 4031)
- "The most excellent Jihad is that for the conquest of self."
(Tirmidhi, Fazaile Jihad: 1546)
- "If you put your whole trust in Allah, as you ought, He most certainly will satisfy your needs, as He satisfies those of the birds. They come out hungry in the morning, but return full to their nests." (Tirmidhi, Kitabuz Zuhad: 2266)
- "When Allah created his creatures He wrote above His throne:
- 'Verily, my Compassion overcomes my wrath.'
(Bukhari, Badul Khalq: 2955)
- "Much silence and a good disposition, there are no two things better than these." (Shub-ul-Iman, Husn-ul-Khalk: 7777)
- "Verily, Allah is mild and is fond of mildness, and He gives to the mild what He does not give to the harsh." (Muslim, Kitabul Birr: 4697)
- "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him."
(Bukhari, Kitabur Rikak: 6026)

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- "Once the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked, 'Tell us, which action is dearest to Allah?' He answered: 'To say your prayer at its proper time.' Again he was asked: 'What comes next?' Mohammed (ﷺ) said: 'To show kindness to parents.' 'Then what?' he (ﷺ) was asked, 'To strive for the cause of Allah!'" (*Muslim, Kitabul Iman: 122*)

- "When three persons are together, two of them must not whisper to each other, without letting the third hear; because it would hurt him." (*Muslim, Kitabus Salaam: 4054*)

- "Verily, it is one of the duties to Allah to honour an old Muslim."
(Abu Dawood, Kitabul Aab: 4203)

- "All Muslims are like a foundation, each strengthening the other; in such a way they do support each other."
(Bukhari, Kitabus Salaat: 459)

- "You will not enter paradise until you have faith; and you will not complete your faith till you love one another."
(Muslim, Kitabul Iman: 81)

- "I am leaving two things among you, and if you cling to them firmly you will never go astray; one is the Book of Allah and the other is my way of life." (*Muatta, Kitabul Jamae', 1395*)

- "Allah is One and likes Unity." (*Muslim, Kitabuz Zikr: 4835*)

- "He is not a perfect Muslim, who eats till he is full and leaves his neighbours hungry." (*Shubul Iman: 9215*)

- "Allah will not give mercy to those who do not show mercy to other creatures." (*Bukhari, Kitabul Tauheed: 6828*)

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How Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه Embraced Islam

One day, when Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه was ten years old, he came home and saw something strange. Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ was standing with his head bent forward and his hands folded on his chest. His wife Khadijah رضي الله عنها, was also standing beside him, doing the same thing.

As Hazrat Ali watched them, Rasulullah ﷺ and Hazrat Khadijah رضي الله عنها bowed towards the ground. They stayed in that position for a moment and then stood up straight again. Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه wondered what they were doing. Then he saw them go down on their knees and touch the ground with their foreheads.

"What a strange thing to do!", though Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه "I have often seen people bowing down before stone idols, but there is no idol here. Rasulullah ﷺ and Hazrat Khadijah رضي الله عنها are certainly not worshipping an idol, but they are worshipping Someone."

Hazrat Ali was a sensible boy. Although he did not completely understand what Rasulullah ﷺ was doing, he knew that he was praying. He thought that Rasulullah ﷺ was praying to a God whom he could not see. Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه very much wanted to know who this unseen God was.

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As soon as Rasulallah ﷺ had finished his prayer, Hazrat Ali ﷺ asked him what he had been doing. Muhamad ﷺ was pleased when the boy asked him to explain.

He smiled at Hazrat Ali ﷺ and said to him, "Listen carefully my boy! Hazrat Khadijah ﷺ and I were worshipping Allah ﷻ. He is the One and only True God. There is no God but He.

Allah ﷻ has chosen me to be His Messenger. He has ordered me to take His message to my people. This is His message and this is what I have to tell the people. They should give up all false gods and worship only Him. They must obey Him alone, because He is the One and only True God."

Rasulallah ﷺ then looked Hazrat Ali ﷺ straight in the eyes and said to him, "You know how much I love you. I have looked after you as if you were my own son. I have never told you a lie - I have never deceived you. I want you to believe the truth that I have just told you. There is no God but Allah ﷻ; He has chosen me as His prophet ﷺ."

Hazrat Ali ﷺ knew at once that Rasulallah was speaking the truth, and so he believed what Rasulallah ﷺ had said.

The Blessed Prophet was delighted. "Welcome Ali ﷺ," he said. "You know in your heart what I have said is true. I can see you have accepted Allah as the One and only True God. You are the first boy to become a Muslim." (Hayatus Sahaba: 35/1)



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The Jackal that Pretended to be a Peacock

A jackal once got into a dyeing-vat and tarried there for space. Then he got out again, and his skin was stained with the dye.

'See, I have become the peacock of heaven!' he cried.

Indeed, his dyed fur had acquired a delightful colour so he showed it to his fellow jackals.

'Little jackal,' they all exclaimed, 'what is the matter? What have you done to yourself?'

'You here,' one of the jackals went up to him and cried, 'are you a pretender, or fooling us or are you fooling yourself or have you gone mad. Maybe someone has fooled you into thinking what you are not.'

The multicoloured jackal slunk up quietly and whispered to himself.

'Why, just look at me! Look at my colours! No one like me has ever been born and shall never will! Call me the pride of the world, but no! These fools belittle me.'

The jackals gathered about him like moths around a candle.

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'Say, what shall we call you then, creature of heaven, he he he!'

'Peacocks,' they then said to him, 'display their beauty in gardens. Do you make such a display?'

'No,' he replied. 'I have never been out of this jungle.'

'Do you speak like peacocks?'

'No,' he answered.

'Then you are not a peacock, father of lofty airs! The glory-robe of the peacock is the gift of heaven; how should you ever attain to it by means of dyes and false pretences?'



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The Park Bench

The park bench was deserted as I sat down to read beneath the long, straggly branches of an old willow tree. Disillusioned by life with good reason to frown, for the world was intent on dragging me down.

And if that weren't enough to ruin my day, a young boy, out of breath, approached me, all tired from play. He stood right before me with his head tilted down and said with great excitement, "Look at what I found!"

In his hand was a flower, and what a pitiful sight, with its petals all worn - not enough rain, or too little light. Wanting him to take his dead flower and go off to play, I faked a small smile and then shifted away.

But instead of retreating he sat next to my side and placed the flower to his nose and declared with overacted surprise, "It sure smells pretty and it's beautiful, too. That's why I picked it; here, it's for you." The weed before me was dying or dead. Not vibrant of colours: orange, yellow or red.

But I knew I must take it, or he might never leave. So I reached for the flower, and replied, "Just what I need." But instead of him placing the flower in my hand, he held it mid-air without reason or plan.

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It was then that I noticed for the very first time that weed-toting boy could not see: he was blind.

I heard my voice quiver; tears shone in the sun as I thanked him for picking the very best one.

"You're welcome," he smiled, and then ran off to play, unaware of the impact he'd had on my day.

I sat there and wondered how he managed to see a self-pitying person beneath an old willow tree. How did he know of my self-indulged plight? Perhaps from his heart, he'd been blessed with true sight.

Through the eyes of a blind child, at last I could see the problem was not with the world; the problem was me. And for all of those times I myself had been blind, I vowed to see the beauty in life, and appreciate every second that's mine.

And then I held that wilted flower up to my nose and breathed in the fragrance of a beautiful rose. I smiled watching that young boy with another weed in his hand, about to change the life of an unsuspecting old man.



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The Secret

A woman named Maryam once knew a young person at the Dars named Aisha. Aisha always seemed effervescent and happy, although Maryam knew she had faced struggles in her life. Her long-awaited marriage had quickly ended in divorce.

She had struggled to get a grip on her single life. She hadn't chosen it, but she decided she would live it with utmost enjoyment and satisfaction. Aisha was active in the madressah, in the day trips out, as a leader of the women's sports club, and in the da'wah movement. Maryam enjoyed knowing Aisha. Aisha's whole face seemed to smile and she always greeted Maryam with a hug.

One day she asked Aisha, "How is it that you are always so happy - you have so much energy, and you never seem to get down?"

With her eyes smiling, Aisha said, "I know the secret!"

"What secret is that? What are you talking about?" Maryam asked.

Aisha replied, "I'll tell you all about it, but you have to promise to share the 'secret' with others."

Maryam agreed, "Okay, now what is it?"

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"The secret is this: I have learned there is little I can do in my life that will make me truly happy. I must depend on Allah ﷻ to make me happy and meet my needs. When a need arises in my life, I have to trust Allah to supply from His infinite riches. I have learned most of the time that I don't need half of what I think I do. He has never let me down. Since I learnt that secret, I am happy."

Maryam's first thought was, "That's too simple!" But upon reflecting over her own life she recalled how she thought a bigger house would make her happy - but it didn't! She thought a better-paying job would make her happy - but it hadn't. When did she realize her greatest happiness? Sitting on the floor with her grandchildren, eating pizza - a simple gift from Allah..



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500 Years of Worship

Angel Jibrail عليه السلام told RasulAllah ﷺ the following incident about a man in the past who worshipped Allah تبارك وتعالى continuously for 500 years. He was granted a shelter on top of a mountain that was surrounded by salty water. However, Allah caused a stream of sweet water to flow through the mountain for that individual. The man would drink from this water and use it to make ablution. Allah تبارك وتعالى also raised a pomegranate tree from which the man would eat one fruit every day.

One day, this person supplicated to Allah تبارك وتعالى that, “O Allah, bring my death while I am in the state of prostration.”

Allah تبارك وتعالى accepted this dua of his. Whenever Jibrail عليه السلام came down to the earth, he found this man prostrating to Allah. Jibrail عليه السلام said that on the day of Judgement, Allah will tell the angels to take this individual to paradise through His mercy. However, this man will insist that he should enter paradise through the good deeds that he had performed.

Then, Allah تبارك وتعالى will tell the angels to compare his good deeds with the blessings that were given to him in the world. It will be seen that 500 years of his worship does not even equal to the gift of eyesight that

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was given to him by Allah. The angels will be asked to take him towards the hell fire. Then the man will plead, "O Allah! Enter me into Paradise only through Your mercy." At that point, the following discussion will take place between Allah ﷻ and that man.

Allah: O my servant, who created you?

The worshipper: O Allah, You have created me.

Allah: Were you created because of the good deeds you have done or because of my mercy?

The worshipper: Because of Your mercy.

Allah: Who granted you the ability to worship for 500 years?

The worshipper: O the Almighty! You have granted me that ability.

Allah: Who placed you on the mountain surrounded by the ocean? Who caused a stream of sweet water to flow in between the salty water? Who caused a pomegranate tree to grow for you? Who granted you death while in the state of prostration?

The worshipper: O the Sustainer of the Worlds! You have done all of this.

Then Allah ﷻ will say, "All these have happened due to My mercy and you too will enter paradise only through My Mercy."

We can never fully thank Allāh ﷻ for the blessings that He has given us. Let us use these blessings to recognize Allah ﷻ before our death. (Tambihul Gafileen, Kitabur Rahmatillah; 42:1)

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Sand and Stone

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand:

"TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE."

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one, who had been slapped, got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After the friend recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone:

"TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him,

"After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?"

The other friend replied, "When someone hurts us, we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

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Had I But Known (Part 1)

Anfal, a rich young girl, sat waiting impatiently at the doctor's clinic to get the results of a medical test. She was in a hurry to attend a party and feared she might be late for her appointment with the hairdresser. She never thought the result would be anything important. It was just a precaution insisted upon by her family.

She had never suffered any serious illness, apart from the odd ache in her limbs. Then, it was her turn to see the doctor. She hurried inside to get it over with as quickly as possible. She was surprised to see the doctor look sad and concerned as he asked,

"Is this yours?"

She answered, "No, it is my daughter's."

She wanted to know the truth and thought that perhaps he would hide the truth, if she told him it was her own. He asked her to have a seat, so she sat feeling somewhat afraid. She looked on anxiously as he said, "Why did not you send a man to get the results?"

Anfal said, "It was on my way so there was no need to send someone else."

The doctor looked sadly at her and said, "You seem to be an educated girl. You understand the nature of life."

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He stopped talking, and she began to tremble.

She asked, "What do you mean doctor?"

The doctor said, "The result indicates that there is a blood disease." He looked down at his papers and remained silent. Anfal had to ask him to give her more information. She cried in fear, "Is it cancer?"

He did not look at her, but a cloud of sadness covered his face. It was as if he was sentencing her to death.

She said in a broken voice, "I am finished then." The doctor knew then that she had lied, but it was too late to hide the truth. He spoke sympathetically, "I am sorry for you. Why did you lie? Anyway life and death are matters within Allah's **تَدْوِينِ** power. Many sick people live long and many healthy ones die."

Anfal felt as if she were drowning, as if a hard fist was cruelly squeezing her heart. She tried hard to regain her strength and said, "I do apologize. Thank you, doctor."

The doctor encouraged her saying, "Be strong and optimistic. Medical science is constantly progressing. Some of today's incurable sicknesses can be cured tomorrow. I still have hope. Leave me your telephone number." She repeated the number automatically without knowing what she was saying. Feeling great shock and bitterness, she again thanked the doctor and left.

At home she kept the truth to herself. She did not know how to share it. Anyway, everyone was busy, getting ready for the party. Her mother asked,

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"Have you been to the doctor? Why did not you go to the hairdresser?" It was just a by-the-way question, needing no answer.

She briefly said, "I am not going to the party!"

She went upstairs into her room and locked the door.

She stretched out on her bed and listened to her family's voices, as if they were coming from a faraway place. The wind seemed to her to be a funeral sad tune, lamenting her approaching death. The bedroom seemed strange to her as she would be leaving it soon. What about the house? It would not remember her. She was just a guest. Others would take her room and soon forget her. She tried to cry but tears did not help.

She looked around her in pain. Those curtains that she had tried so hard to get, would stay after her. It would not have mattered if they had been made of the roughest fabric, she would leave them for others. She wished she had not troubled herself with such things. She wished she had saved her time and money for more useful things, which could have been helpful to her in her difficulty.

She wondered, "What is useful to me?" She was young, beautiful and rich with everything her heart could desire. Could anything help her and save her from death? She had always longed for an official job with a good salary. She had it, but could it save her from death?

An idea struck her. She hurried to the phone while everyone was away. She dialed the doctor's number and asked eagerly,

"If I travel abroad can I find a cure?"

He said, "There is nothing new abroad. It is a waste of money."

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She put the phone down and sat on a nearby chair.

Her salary would not change matters. She walked through the house's rooms as if saying her farewells. She paced the small garden and looked at the trees. She whispered, "I wish these trees knew I am leaving them, those stones, walls...I wish these doors knew my hands will soon no longer open them. I wish those flowers, that I planted and watered knew. How often the thorns and hard stones tore my hands!

How often I watered those dying flowers with my tears when there was no water. I wish they knew the meaning of my departure. These fruiting trees were tiny when I planted them. I did my best to help them flourish until they grew up healthy and fruitful. Will they know I am soon leaving? Will they remember my days in their company? What about these seats, I used to rest on. Will they miss my presence? Will they be ready for someone else to settle on them? My writing desk felt my writing in tears and in smiles; does it know I am leaving? Will it miss my pen and papers in its drawers? I wish they all knew I am leaving. I wish I had known I was leaving, and then I would not have cared so much for this life. I would not have felt proud and arrogant...

Had I known I were a guest in this world I would not have been cheated or tempted by its luxuries...

Had I known this I would have been aware that leaving a simple life is easier than leaving a luxurious one...

Had I lived a simple life, I would not have found it difficult to cross from this world to the next. My family is now enjoying the party...how often I longed for such parties, how much I cared for fashion and hairstyles! Can they help me now?"

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Had I But Known (Part 2)

Anfal threw herself down on the nearest chair as if she had realized a truth previously unknown to her.

She said, "What shall I take with me? Nothing but the coffin and my deeds. What kind of deeds will go with me on my long journey? Nothing! Yes, nothing!" She remembered her friend Sarah, who used to advise her and guide her to the right path of Allah ﷻ. She used to remind her of the Qur'anic verse: ...and make provision, for the provision is the guarding of oneself. [Al-Baqarah:197]

She had never considered the importance of good deeds. Now she was in need of such deeds to present to Allah ﷻ. She would stand to give her account, but what would she say? How could she expect Allah's ﷻ mercy when she disobeyed His orders? How could she ask for forgiveness when she never even thought of obeying Him in her life's affairs?

She wished she had read the Holy Qur'an instead of all those cheap novels. She wished she had gained some knowledge of her religion instead of reading film-star magazines. She continued wishing she had done few things, and not done other things. She wished she had not angered this person or that, and had never lied or gossiped about anyone. She wished she had not been proud and despised the poor.

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She said, "I wish I could start my life all over again to make-up for my errors and to obey Allah's **تعالى** orders. I worshipped my desires and ignored my Creator. I wish I could live for a while to make up for my sins."

She remembered a Qur'anic verse, her grandfather used to recite:

Until when death overtakes one of them he says: Send me back, my Lord. So I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! It is a mere word that he speaks, and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised.[surah al-Muminun: 99-100]

Here she said, "Oh God, I do mean it..." Tears burst from her eyes. She cried bitterly in repentance, not pain. She decided to obey Allah **تعالى** in all His orders if she lived a bit longer. The phone rang and she walked towards it lazily. Tears in her eyes she said, "Yes?"

Someone said, "Can I speak to Miss Anfal?" She knew the speaker. It was her doctor. She said, "Yes, speaking."

The doctor said cheerfully, "Congratulations my daughter! There is nothing wrong with you. Thank God!"

She was stunned with surprise. She did not know what to say. "No disease? How? You are joking, doctor!"

The doctor said, "May Allah **تعالى** protect me I am not joking. I have just got an apology from the analyst. He explained that there was a mix-up with the names. Your name was written instead of someone else. I have your medical report here in front of me. You are quite well. Be thankful to Allah my daughter."

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Excitedly she said, "Thanks be to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, Thank you doctor."

She put the phone down, feeling as if she was new born. She knew she was safe for a while, but death would certainly come one day. She had no time to waste. However long she lived she was a guest.

The first thing she did was to perform her prayer, which she had neglected for a long time. She promised Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to obey His orders to pray, fast, and stick to wearing decent clothes. She would also give up whatever Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى had forbidden. In order not to forget this, she wrote the Qur'anic verse on a placard and hung it on the wall. On the other side she wrote a wise saying:

"Repent the day before you die. Because you do not know when you will die, then always be repentant."



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Qurtaba (Cordoba)

Ahsan asked Grandpa, “Daadaa, I read about a city called Qurtaba. This is the first time I am hearing such a strange name. Can you please tell me more?”

Grandpa replied, “Yes Ahsan, in fact I was reading about it right now. You can take this page and give it back when you are done.”

Ahsan said, “May Allah ﷻ bless you Daadaa, I needed some information to do an assignment. You are so nice and helpful.” Grandpa was smiling as Ahsan went away to the study room.

Do you know that Ahsan got the highest marks in that assignment? Yes, and he wanted to share it with you. So here it is:

Architecture And Learning

In Qurtaba Under The Ummayyad Rule

Introduction: Qurtaba (present day Cordoba) is a city in Spain. Qurtuba is situated at the foot of the ridge of mountains called the Sierra Morena, forming a semicircular amphitheater on the right bank of Guadalquivir.

Architecture: During the Ummayyad rule of Spain, there were 3,800 mosques, 60,000 palaces, and mansions, 200,000 houses inhabited by common people, 700 baths, 80,000 shops, and 70 libraries in Qurtuba.

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When Abdur Rahman fled to Spain, one of his first acts was to build an aquaduct for the supply of pure water. His successors continually rendered additions to it until the water supply was better than any other city's. The Muslims loved water and no mansion was without a garden, running rills of water, and a fountain. Abdur Rahman III constructed another great aquaduct. It was made over arches scientifically designed and conveyed the water from the neighbouring mountains to the water works of the city. There the water was discharged into a vast reservoir in the middle of which was the figure of a lion covered with plates of gold spouting waters from its mouth. The then famous garden of Russafa was packed with rare plants from around the world. The building of the great mosque of Qurtuba was started during Abdur-Rahman's reign. It ended during the reign of Abdur Rahman III. It had rows of orange trees outside in the courtyard.

Learning: The Ummayyads loved literature and sciences. They were great collectors of books and always enriched libraries with rare books. The library's catalogue had 44 volumes. Muslims brought thousands of books to Spain. The largest library housed 500,000 books. At this time, a Christian monastery would be proud to house several hundred books. Men and women attended the university and law school in Qurtuba. A host of clerks hand-copied about 70,000 books a year. Christians and Jews worked with Muslims to translate books. Hakam, one Caliph, converted Spain into a great market where literature from every country was immediately brought for sale. He established many elementary schools where poor children received great knowledge for free. At this time in Christian Europe even rich people could not read or write. At the time of the Ummayyads, 1 million people lived in Qurtuba.

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And Ahsan left a note for you; it says,

“Please make reading a habit. Go to libraries and also buy books. Don’t just read the schoolbooks, one should know more. I remember Daadaa once told me,

‘Knowledge opens up your mind and makes you resolve, evolve and resolute.’”



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Hickory, Dickory Dock

Once upon a time there was a beautiful village in West Bengal. The whole village had only one clock in a hotel where the tourists would come and stay. All the villagers had to go and check the time in the hotel.

It so happened that one day the clock started going a little fast. First nobody noticed it, but minute-by-minute the clock was slowly getting ahead of the actual time.

One day, when the clock had gone one hour ahead of the correct time, people started getting up early in the morning. And they would go to bed one hour earlier.

Then the clock started showing two, then three hours ahead of the actual time. And it so happened that on a Monday, a Particular family came to visit the village. There were three Particular kids, and two Particular parents in the family: Father Particular, Mother Particular, Brother Particular, Sister Particular, and Baby Particular.

The Baby Particular saw the clock and started crying, "Wa Wa Wa" She cried so loud that sister Particular got worried.

She said, "Brother Particular! Baby Particular is crying. There must be something wrong." Brother Particular was worried too.

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He said, "What can be wrong? There must be something wrong with the time. Mother Particular, what can be wrong?"

Now Mother Particular was worried too, "What can be wrong? We have never been late, we have never been early. We are always on time. Surely there must be something wrong. But what is it?" Father Particular was always very intelligent and particular.

He said, "I know! Look there at the clock hanging on the wall of the hotel. It is three hours eight minutes ahead of the correct time. Oh my God! The whole village is not particular. They are ahead of their schedule. This is the worst thing I have ever seen. We must help them!"

And so Father Particular took out a brand new clock from his bag, and hung it on the wall in the hotel. Mother Particular gave Brother Particular and Sister Particular clocks with "the correct time" and said, "Children, the people of this beautiful village need clocks with correct time. Go and distribute them for free."

Father Particular took the clock that was not particularly showing the correct time and got it repaired. Then he showed it to Baby Particular, who by the way was crying all the time. When baby particular saw that the clock was working particularly correct, she smiled and stopped crying.

And from that day onwards, people of the beautiful village, thanks to the Particular Family, always get up and go to bed on time, and they are never ahead or behind their schedule.



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Abu-d Darda رضي الله تعالى عنه (Part 1)

During his days of ignorance, early one morning, Hazrat Abu-d Darda' رضي الله تعالى عنه awoke and went straight to his idol which he kept in the best part of his house. He greeted it and made obeisance to it. Then he anointed it with the best perfume from his large shop and put on it a new raiment of beautiful silk that a merchant had brought to him the day before from Yemen.

When the sun was high in the sky, he left his house for his shop. On that day the streets and alleys of Yathrib were crowded with the followers of Muhammad ﷺ returning from Badr. With them were several prisoners of war. Abu-d Darda' رضي الله تعالى عنه surveyed the crowds and then went up to a Khazraji youth and asked about the fate of 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah رضي الله تعالى عنه.

"He was put through the severest tests in the battle, but he emerged safely..."

Abu-d Darda' رضي الله تعالى عنه was clearly anxious about his close friend, Hazrat 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah رضي الله تعالى عنه. Everyone in Yathrib knew the bond of brotherhood that existed between the two men from the days of Jahilyah. When Islam came to the city, Ibn Rawahah رضي الله تعالى عنه embraced it but Abu-d Darda' رضي الله تعالى عنه rejected it. This however did not rupture the relationship between the two. 'Abdullah kept on visiting Abu-d Darda'

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ﷺ and tried to make him see the virtues, the benefits and the excellence of Islam. But with every passing day, while Abu-d Darda' ﷺ remained a mushrik, 'Abdullah ﷺ felt more sad and concerned.

Abu-d Darda' ﷺ arrived at his shop and sat cross-legged on a high chair. He began trading - buying and selling and giving instructions to his assistants - unaware of what was going on at his house. For at that very time, 'Abdullah ﷺ had gone to the house determined on a course of action. There, he saw that the main gate was open. Umm ad-Darda' ﷺ was in the courtyard and he said to her:

"Assalamu 'alaykum,"

"Wa 'alaykumus-salam, O brother of Abu-d Darda'."

"Where is Abu-d Darda'?" he asked.

"He has gone to his shop. It won't be long before he returns."

"Would you allow me to come in?"

"Make yourself at home," she said and went about doing her household chores and looking after her children.

'Abdullah ibn Rawahah went to the room where Abu Darda' ﷺ kept his idol. He took out an adz that he had brought with him and began destroying the idol while saying:

"Isn't everything batil which is worshipped besides Allah?"

When the idol was completely smashed, he left the house. Abu-d Darda's wife entered the room shortly afterwards and was aghast at what she saw. She smote her cheeks in anguish and said, "You have brought ruin to me, Ibn Rawahah."

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When Abu Darda' رضي الله عنه returned home, he saw his wife sitting at the door of the room where he kept his idol. She was clearly distressed and she looked absolutely terrified.

"What's wrong with you?" he asked.

"Your brother 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah visited us in your absence and did with your idols what you see here."

Abu-d Darda' رضي الله عنه looked at the broken idol and was horrified. He was filled with anger and determined to take revenge. Before long however, his anger subsided and thoughts of avenging the idol disappeared. Instead, he reflected on what had happened and said to himself, "If there was any good in this idol, he would have defended himself against any injury."

He then went straight to 'Abdullah رضي الله عنه and together they went to the Prophet ﷺ. There he announced his acceptance of Islam. He was the last person in his district to become a Muslim.

From this time onwards, Abu-d Darda' رضي الله عنه devoted himself completely to Islam. Belief in Allah تبارك وتعالى and His Prophet ﷺ animated every fibre of his being. He deeply regretted every moment he had spent as a Mushrik and the opportunities he had lost to do well. He realized how much his friends had learned about Islam in the preceding two or three years, how much of the Qur'an they had memorized and the opportunities they had to devote themselves to Allah تبارك وتعالى and His Prophet ﷺ. He made up his mind to expend every effort to try to make up for what he had missed. 'Ibadah occupied his days and his nights. His search for knowledge was restless. Much of his time was spent memorizing the Quran Karim and trying to understand the profundity of its message.

(Dalail-un-Nubuwwat, Abwab-e-Tabu; 2560)

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Abu-d Darda رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ (Part 2)

Once, Abu-d Dardha رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ passed a group of people crowding around a man. They began insulting and beating the man. He came up to them and asked:

"What's the matter?"

"This is a man who has committed a grave sin," they replied.

"What do you think you would do if he had fallen into a well?" asked Abu-d Darda' رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ. "Wouldn't you try to get him out?"

"Certainly," they said.

"Don't insult him and don't beat him. Instead, admonish him and make him aware of the consequences of what he had done. Then give praise to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى Who has protected you from falling into such a sin."

"Don't you hate him?" they asked Abu-d Darda' رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ.

"I only detest what he had done and if he abandons such practice, he is my brother." (Sifat-u-Safwa, Tabkat-u-Sania: 143/1)



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Glowing Quotes

- Always fear Allah; He knows what is in men's hearts.
- Be kind to those who are under you and treat them well.
- Give brief directions; directions that are too long are likely to be forgotten.
- Improve your own conduct before asking others to improve their's.
- Honour the enemy's envoy.
- Maintain the secrecy of your plans.
- Always speak the truth, so that you get the right advice.
- Consult your men when you are free to do so; this will develop participation.
- Take suitable measures to keep watch on the army.
- Be sincere to all with whom you deal.
- Give up cowardice and dishonesty.
- Give up bad company.

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Minko in Trouble

One day, long ago, some sailors set out to sea in their ship. One of them brought his pet monkey, Minko along for the long journey.

When they were far out at sea, a terrible storm overturned their ship. Everyone fell into the sea, and Minko was sure that he would drown. Suddenly a dolphin appeared and picked him up.

They soon reached an island and Minko came down from the dolphin's back. The dolphin asked Minko, "Do you know this place?"

Minko instead of thanking the dolphin told a lie, "Yes, I do. In fact, the king of the island is my best friend. Do you know that I am actually a prince?"

Knowing that no one lived on the island, the dolphin said, "Well, well, so you are a prince! Now you can be a king!"

Minko was surprised and asked, "How can I be a king?"

As the dolphin started swimming away, he answered, "That is easy. As you are the only creature on this island, you will naturally be the king!"

And so Minko had to live a lonely life with no friends for the rest of his days.

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The Echoing Canyon

Today Aslam was really agitated. He was having lots of problems at school. Some of the kids there were behaving badly with him and when he retaliated they would behave even worse. He found it really hard to cope up with all of this. But today it had been the worse. The bullies had taken his notebook and diary, so he got very angry and shouted at them. The bullies did not like it and beat him up.

Seeing his bad mood his father asked him what was wrong and he told him the whole story. But instead of sympathising with him, his father told him, "Son tomorrow is a holiday. I had a plan but now I have changed it. Tomorrow I am going to take you to a very special place. Be ready after Fajr, we will set out as early as possible."

Aslam was a bit confused. He thought that maybe his father wanted to discuss all this in a peaceful environment. So the next day he was ready before dawn, and immediately after Fajr both father and son were away on a long drive.

Finally they reached a beautiful place on a steep hill overlooking a vast wilderness. Aslam and father started climbing till they reached almost the top of the hill where there were a lot of thorns. His father said, "Son be caref - - -" but before he could complete his sentence Aslam got pricked by a thorn. He gave a loud noise, "Aaaaah!!!" To his surprise a loud resonating voice struck his ears saying, "Aaaah!!!"

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Aslam was surprised and angry.

He yelled back, "Shut up stupid!"

The voice answered back, "Shut up stupid!" It seemed as there were many people hidden in the wilderness copying his voice and making fun. Aslam shouted, "Don't make fun of me!"

But the voice returned, "Don't make fun of me!"

Aslam was pretty surprised.

He asked his father in whispers, "Abbu, what is going on?"

His father said, "Son, do not worry. It is just your echo. When you speak the sound reflects back to you. This is what I wanted to show you."

Aslam replied, "It is amazing! It's wonderful!"

His father said, "I hope your foot is fine now. Now you can shout other things to have a little fun."

Aslam nodded happily and shouted, "My leg is fine."

The voice returned, "My leg is fine."

He said, "You are a good boy."

The voice came back, "You are a good boy."

He said, "Aslam can I be your friend?"

The voice replied, "Aslam can I be your friend?"

Aslam said, "Sure!"

The voice said, "Sure!"

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Now his father told him, “See Sonnie! Life is just like the echo. What you do to others is reflected back to you. If someone does something bad to you, do good to him. One day for sure you will get that good back. Do something bad and you’ll receive worse than it. Be nice to everyone. There is a thing called Makaafaat-e-Amal. In your computer abbreviation; “WYSWYG”. You must have heard the saying, ‘What you sow is what you get’. So don’t be bad to someone who is bad to you, remember two wrongs don’t make one right.”

Aslam had understood the point. They came back home and his mother had cooked Aslam’s favourite dish for lunch; rice, vegetable and fried fish.

Aslam said, “Ammi, can I save little of it for some of my friends?”

His mother said, “Sure! In fact we will all give a little for your friends.”

So the next day when the bullies started teasing Aslam, he took out the delicious food and simply said, “Assalaamalaikum, friends I have this special food for you. I hope you like it.” He gave the lunch box to them and went away.

The bullies shouted at him, “Aslam is scared OOOOh!” But Aslam just smiled back.

The next day the biggest bully came to Aslam and said, “Aslam we are very sorry. We just wanted to have fun. But you are so nice. Please forgive us. Oh! And here is your lunch box. The food was really good. And here is a little gift from all of us.” They had given Aslam back all his things and also a nice wristwatch as a gift!

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Learning It the Hard Way

Aqeel had a major problem of forgetting things. He would forget to do the homework or submit it on time, he would forget what his mother told him to bring back when returning from school, and he would even forget where he put his new clothes and toys. It really was a big problem!

All his friends, teachers, and his family members tried hard to solve this problem but no one was successful. It seemed as if Aqeel would have to live with it.

But they were wrong. They never realised what had caused Aqeel to be so forgetful. Yes! It was his bad habit of not putting things in the right place and not noting down things properly. He would take off his uniform in his brother's room and throw the shoes in the kitchen, he would scribble his homework on a tiny piece of paper and put it in his pocket. Then when his homework was due he would look for it under the bed, inside the cupboard, on the computer table, and finally discover that it had gotten washed inside the pocket of the clothes.

No one ever thought of what the root of his forgetfulness was until a bright sunny day when lots of happiness came into Aqeel's life. His class was going for a picnic at the local zoo. He wanted to join his friends on this occasion. He loved birds and animals. It was the best chance to have

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all the fun and excitement. All he had to do was get his parents' signature on the application given by the school and bring it to school on Saturday. It was very important that he showed the application signed by his parents, otherwise he would not be allowed to go.

Aqeel was so happy. He grabbed the application from the class representative and pushed it inside his bag. At home he went running to his mother, "Ammi please you have to sign it, I want to go with my classmates to the zoo. Please sign it as I will have to show it on Saturday." His mother was delighted to see him so excited about the trip and signed it immediately.

She told him, "Put it in your drawer so that you won't lose it by Saturday." "Yes Ammi sure, I'll do it straight away but I am too hungry right now so please can I have the lunch first" replied Aqeel.

His mother said, "Sure, it is ready for you in the dining room, so go have it before it turns cold."

Off Aqeel ran to the dining room and was about to eat his lunch when Grandma reminded him, "Son first go and wash your hands - - And look you haven't even changed your clothes - - - Why, your face is blooming like a flower, you must be really happy. What's the matter?" Aqeel washed his hands in a jiffy and came back to have lunch while explaining everything to Grandma.

On Saturday morning Aqeel got up, offered his Fajr Salat and had a quick bath. "Abbu Quick! I have to reach school at eight. I don't want to miss the picnic" Aqeel called his father loudly. He was ready to go when his mother called him back from the car, "Aqeel, did you take the application with you."

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Oh no! He had completely forgotten it. He rushed back inside and looked everywhere from his drawers to cupboard to school bag, and this time he even looked inside the washroom as he thought, “Maybe I left it in here while washing my hands that day.” But the application was nowhere to be found. Of all those forgetting events, this was the worst. Aqeel was crying, “Oh how could I! Now I’ll never be able to go to zoo with my friends.”

Just then his father came in with a piece of paper, “Baita, I have written on this piece of paper about the incident and signed it after writing that you are given permission by your parents to go.” Aqeel recovered somewhat and went to the school and reached there just in time.

His principal asked him for the application and he gave him the piece of paper his father had given him. “Interesting,” said the principal “Your father wrote this new application on the back of the application we had distributed. Aqeel, you must have misplaced it and forgot.”

Now Aqeel remembered what had actually gone wrong. He had got the application signed by his mother in her room and left it right there on his father’s desk to have lunch.

He realised that his forgetfulness was all due to his bad habit of not keeping things in their proper places. He learnt his lesson the hard way. From that day onwards he never forgot his homework or any other thing as he kept things in their places and noted down work and assignments in the diary.



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A Wise Decision

Once, two men came to a woman and gave her a hundred dinars each. They told her to keep the money with her and not give it back until both the men came together. After the incident both of them did not return. A year passed and one of them came to the woman claiming the money, but the lady refused saying that you both had agreed that I should not give the money to any one of you until both of you came at the same time. The man said that his partner had died and this means that he cannot come back, but still the lady refused. Now this man got infuriated and started abusing her relatives and neighbours forcing her to give him the money.

Another year passed and the second man came and asked the lady to return his money. The lady replied that your partner came to me and told me that you are dead and has taken all the money away from me.

Now both the lady and the man started arguing and went to a pious Qazi for judgement. As the Qazi was about to give his judgement the lady interfered and told him to refer the case to another pious Qazi. The case was duly sent according to her wish. After hearing the arguments of both sides, the second pious Qazi instantly recognized that the two men had schemed a fraud. He said, "Didn't you two tell the lady

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that she is not supposed to give out the money until the other partner is also present?" He said that they had put this condition, on which the Qazi replied, "We have your money with us, bring the other person so we can give you the money." In this way the wise Qazi saved the poor lady from the mean men.



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Ali and the New Sound System

Ali had saved up his pocket money for the past ten months. One day he went to the market with all the money and returned home with a brand new sound system. When his mother saw this she gasped in surprise, "Why did you waste so much money just to buy this? We already have a cassette player to listen to the bayaan(lectures)."

Ali replied, "Ammi, the cassette player is only good for bayaan. I cannot listen to my favourite songs on that small player."

Now his mother was furious, "Do you know what you are saying? Since when have you started listening to songs? It is haraam! Allah ﷻ and His beloved prophet ﷺ have forbidden music. You should be ashamed of yourself. We never ever let you go near sins only to find out that you are being corrupted by the mother of all evils!" Ali got angry, and slammed the door on his mother's face. He said to himself, "What's wrong in listening to music? All the kids do so. Why me? Ammi is backward, she doesn't realise that the world is advancing fast."

Ali did not come out of his bedroom for lunch and also not in the evening. His mother was worried as well as angry, she said, "O Allah! Please show my son the right way. You know me and Faris have tried our best to keep our only son away from sins and bad habits."

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At night when Ali's father, Faris came home, his mother explained everything. He said, "Let me figure out a way of talking to our hot headed son."

He went into Ali's room and said, "Son we need to talk." Ali was still angry but being afraid of his father's wrath, said, "About the new stereo system I bought, right?"

His father said, "Yes son." Ali had known that his father would try to convince him so he had his plan ready.

He said, "Abbu I am a grown up boy, I need to entertain myself and relax after working all day. Anyway, the world is moving fast and it is cool to listen to music. Everybody does so. Give me one good reason why music is bad."

His father was a little taken aback but replied firmly yet kindly, "Son, listen to me and then answer my one very simple question. Playing or listening to music does not in anyway signify the technological advancement. All that music does is make us ecstatic or sad, in other words it only inflames our negative emotions. It wastes our time and money. Our youth need to excel in science and technology. Music diverts our mind from wholesome activities and leads to many sins. Most of the songs are either about love affairs, drugs or heart breaking depressing events. This only diverts our mind from doing useful things. Kids of your age need to study and play healthy sports to use their energies productively. Our dilemma is that we adopt all the useless things of the western culture and leave out the useful things. You know when Europe was in the Dark Ages, we Muslims were progressing in all the fields of science, medicine and technology. So the Europeans came and learnt from us the science and technology but left out our culture and

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religion. We instead, have adopted their culture and to some extent their religion in place of their positive aspects. And most of all, you have read and heard so many Ahadith against music. Now answer my very simple question, give me one reason why music is good.”

Ali was baffled after listening to his father’s little speech. He was feeling very sorry and ashamed. He searched for words but could not find any. Finally he said, “Abbu I am very sorry. Please forgive me! I see that I was wrong.”

Then he rushed to his mother and cried, “Ammi I am sorry. I was wrong and I behaved unreasonably with you. Please forgive me. I promise I will never listen to music again. As for the music system, I’ll sell it back and give the money in charity.”

Ammi and Abbu were very glad, Ammi embraced Ali and said, “Son I have forgiven you. I love you. But Allah تبارك وتعالى loves you more than me, you disobeyed Allah تبارك وتعالى so beg forgiveness from Him and repent sincerely. Surely Allah تبارك وتعالى is Most Forgiving.”

Ali said, “Ammi I know Allah تبارك وتعالى will forgive me. He loves me so much that He blessed me with such kind parents like you two.”



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The Faithful Boy

It was a dark and lonely night. The faithful son was studying under the moonlight, while the mother who was very ill lay on the bed sleeping. She wasn't feeling well. The son was absorbed in studying, but kept looking at his mother to see if all was well with her.

Suddenly he heard a trembling voice that seemed to come from her mother's room. He rushed there immediately only to find his mother asking for water. He rushed to the jug, but it was empty. The boy was extremely worried, and so he rushed out in the night searching for water, while all the people lay asleep.

The boy reached the river to fetch water for his mother. Meanwhile, his mother fell asleep again. When the boy reached home, he found her sleeping and stood by her bedside waiting for her to wake up. He did not want to disturb her sleep, but could not bear her to wait for water when she got up and felt thirsty.

The faithful boy stood there the whole night but his mother kept on sleeping. Finally, when it was time for Fajr Salat, his mother woke up. She was bewildered to see her son standing there with the glass of water. Overwhelmed with emotion she prayed for her son.

For caring about his mother, he got the reward in the form of her prayers and love. These prayers led him to becoming a very famous Islamic scholar, Ba Yazid Bistaami.

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No Good Deed Is Small

He was drunk, and had a bottle of wine in each hand. He was so drunk that he could not even walk properly and was swaying from left to right. As he was passing through the streets, it was already time for Fajr and the Adhaan was being called from all sides.

As he passed through a narrow lane, his eyes caught hold of what he could not bear to see. Yes, he was drunk but deep inside his heart the light of Islam was fluttering, blanketed by his sins. But now this light showed a flicker, he could not pass away from the muddy lane after watching a piece of paper on which some Quranic ayaat were written. It is an obligation on all Muslims to respect the Quran Majeed as it is the word of Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى**.

He thought for a while about what to do. Although he was drunk, still it seemed that something inside had shaken him up. He dared not lift the paper with his hands because they were carrying wine, which is forbidden in Islam. He thought and thought, and then picked the paper right out of the mud with his mouth. He cleaned the paper, applied perfume and then put it on a high place.

Allah **تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى** appreciated this incident so much that He raised the man's status from a drunk, and made him a renowned scholar of Islam. Do you know the name of this great scholar? His name was Bashr Bin Haafi. (Tarikh-e-Damishk, Bashr Bin Haafi: 181/10)

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Short Stories (Part-5)

A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss

An ass, belonging to a herb-seller who gave him too little food and too much work made a prayer to be released from his present service and provided with another master. His prayer was answered; he was to be sold to a tile-maker. Shortly afterwards, finding that he had heavier loads to carry and harder work in the brickfield, he prayed for another change of master. It was the last time his prayer was heard, and he was sold to a tanner.

The ass found that he had fallen into worse hands, and noticing his master's occupation, said, groaning, "It would have been better for me to have been either starved by the one, or to have been overworked by the other of my former masters, than to have been bought by my present owner, who will even after I am dead, tan my hide and make me useful to him.

A Man is Known by the Company He keeps

A man wished to purchase an ass, and agreed with its owner that he should try out the animal before he bought him. He took the ass home and put him in the straw-yard with his other asses, upon which the new animal left all the others and at once joined the one that was most idle and the greatest eater of them all. Seeing this, the man put a halter on

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him and led him back to his owner. On being asked how, in so short a time, he could have made a trial, he answered, "I do not need a trial; I know that he will be just the same as the one he chose for his companion."

Words are deeds

A trumpeter, during a battle ventured near the enemy and was captured by them. They were about to proceed to put him to death when he begged them to hear his plea for mercy. "I do not fight," said he, "and indeed carry no weapon; I only blow this trumpet, and surely that cannot harm you; then why should you kill me?"

"You may not fight yourself," said the others, "but you encourage and guide your men to fight."

The Crow and the Sheep

A troublesome crow seated herself on the back of a sheep. The sheep, much against his will, carried her backward and forward for a long time, and at last said, "If you had treated a dog in this way, you would have come between his sharp teeth."

To this the crow replied, "I despise the weak and yield to the strong. I know whom I may bully and whom I must flatter; and I thus prolong my life to a good old age."

Out of the Frying Pan and into the Fire

A doe, hard pressed by hunters sought refuge in a cave belonging to a lion. The lion concealed himself on seeing her approach, but when she was safe within the cave, sprang upon her and tore her to pieces.

"Woe to me," exclaimed the doe, "who have escaped from man, only to throw myself into the mouth of a wild beast?"

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Good Old Lamb and the Little Mousy

Once there were a few animals, surprisingly, all of them were friends. There was a hen, a peacock, a lamb, and a mouse.

All of them worked and ate together. But the mouse was lazy and was always on a lookout to run away from work.

So one day, they were working in the jungle, when the mouse did not feel like working, he cried out, "Oo! Oo! I think I got pricked by a thorn in my tiny and weak feet."

All the rest said, "You should go and take that thorn out before you start losing blood." And that is exactly what the mouse wanted to hear. He went away looking for some shade to get a quick sleep. He found a well, and thought he'd go inside for a quiet sleep. He jumped into the empty bucket. But! The bucket started falling into the well, as the other bucket had very little water in it.

Now the little mousy was in big trouble! It did not know what to do. Luckily, old lamb was keeping a watch on him because he knew that the mouse was rather lazy. The lamb had seen that the mouse did not get pricked by thorn, and that he had gone into the well.

Now the old lamb was wondering why the mouse jumped into the well. He thought, "Maybe little mouse has some secret treasure in there."

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So off he went and peeped inside the well. But it was dark inside and he couldn't see a thing.

He yelled, "What are you doing down there in the dark, little mousy?"

The mouse thought it was a good chance for him to get out. He replied back, "Good to have you here old lamb. Would you like to share some of the lovely food I have over here?"

Now the unsuspecting lamb was getting greedy with the thoughts of something delicious and he said, "Yes sure, I knew you would not forget your old friend. How can I come and join you?"

The mouse replied cunningly, "Just hop into this bucket and you'll be here in no time." But the unwitting lamb did not know what he was going into! As soon as he jumped into the bucket, he went down into the dark well at a great speed, and up went the mouse. He hopped out, and was about to go when he felt it wasn't right to leave his old friend behind. He went out looking for help, and guess what he saw? Yes a hunter was coming to the well. He went back and cried, "Sorry dear old lamb, now if you want to get out, listen to me. There is a hunter coming this way. As soon as he pulls your bucket up thinking that the water is inside; jump and run for your life!"

So when the hunter came, he threw his bag and gun down and started pulling up the bucket. But he was surprised and shocked to see a lamb jumping out of the bucket and running away. Before he could grab his gun, the two were out of sight.

From then on the good old lamb and the little mousy would burst out laughing in front of the peacock and the hen. But only they knew the reason behind those silly laughs - - - And perhaps the hunter also sometimes laughed loudly in front of his friends who did not have a clue!

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The Scientific Discovery

This is a true story of a bygone era about a 26-year-old young and budding scientist, Archimedes who studied the two known sciences—astronomy and geometry—in Syracuse, Sicily. One day Archimedes was distracted by four boys playing on the beach with a drift wood plank. They balanced the board over a waist-high rock. One boy straddled one end while his three friends jumped hard onto the other. The lone boy was tossed into the air. The boys slid the board off-center along their balancing rock so that only one-quarter of it remained on the short side. Three of the boys climbed onto the short, top end. The fourth boy bounded onto the rising long end, crashing it back down to the sand and catapulting his three friends into the air.

Archimedes was fascinated. And he determined to understand the principles that so easily allowed a small weight (one boy) to lift a large weight (three boys). Archimedes used a strip of wood and small wooden blocks to model the boys and their driftwood. He made a triangular block to model their rock. By measuring as he balanced different combinations of weights on each end of the lever (lever came from the Latin word meaning “to lift”), Archimedes realized that levers were an example of one of Euclid’s proportions at work. The force (weight) pushing down on each side of the lever had to be proportional to the lengths of board on

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each side of the balance point. He had discovered the mathematical concept of levers, the most common and basic lifting system ever devised.

Fifteen years later, the now famous and well-known, Archimedes was ordered by King Hieron to find out whether a goldsmith had cheated the king. Hieron had given the smith a weight of gold and asked him to fashion a solid-gold crown. Even though the crown weighed exactly the same as the original gold, the king suspected that the goldsmith had wrapped a thin layer of gold around some other, cheaper metal in side. Archimedes was ordered to discover whether the crown was solid gold without damaging the crown itself. Now he was in a fix! After all, Archimedes was a scientist not a detective; being a good scientist doesn't mean a person is good at catching thieves. And to top it all, the King had threatened to behead Archimedes if he could not confirm or prove the king's suspicion wrong.

It seemed like an impossible task. For several days he thought of a way to find out and time was running out as the king had given only a small number of days to detect the crime. In order to relax his nerves he went to a public bath house. There Archimedes noticed his arm floating on the water's surface. A vague idea began to form in his mind. He pulled his arm completely under the surface. Then he relaxed and it floated back up. He stood up in the tub. The water level dropped around the tub's sides. He sat back down. The water level rose. He lay down. The water rose higher, and he realized that he felt lighter. He stood up. The water level fell and he felt heavier. Water had to be pushing up on his submerged body to make it feel lighter. When Archimedes discovered this, he leapt from the bath and shouted the famous word "Eureka!" which means "I found it!"

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He carried a stone and a block of wood of about the same size into the tub and submerged them both. The stone sank, but felt lighter. He had to push the wood down to submerge it. That meant that water pushed up with a force related to the amount of water displaced by the object (the object's size) rather than to the object's weight. How heavy the object felt in the water had to relate to the object's density (how much each unit volume of it weighed). That showed Archimedes how to answer the king's question. He returned to the king.

The key was density. If the crown was made of some other metal than gold, it could weigh the same but would have a different density and thus occupy a different volume. The crown and an equal weight of gold were dunked into a bowl of water. The crown displaced more water and was thus shown to be a fake.

More importantly, Archimedes discovered the principle of buoyancy: Water pushes up on objects with a force equal to the amount of water the objects displace. Archimedes was not a bad detective after all!



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Reciting in Space

Bilal always dreamt of being a good Qari and Naatkhawan. He tried his best to practice and he could have been very good – but there was one problem. To practice meant to disturb a lot of old people like his grandparents, uncles, aunts and neighbours. He knew that if he gets loud not only the elders will be disturbed but all the younger kids doing their homework would also be disturbed.

Bilal was a very good and respecting boy so he tried to practice at the strangest of all places so that people are not bothered. He went to the basement, kitchen, attic and even in the garden. But it was no good; there was always someone who would be disturbed. However, determined to practice he always tried to improvise.

One day while reading a book he found out that sound needs a medium to travel and it cannot travel in space because it is a vacuum. At that moment he decided to become an astronaut Naatkhawan and Qari . . . well sort of!

With the help of loads of books, and a lot of hard work Bilal built his own space capsule. It was a big glass ball with an air pump connected to it which could suck out all the air from it. Inside he had a Quran-e-Karim, a few books of naat and a machine to provide him air to breathe

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that would fit into his homemade space costume. He entered it and the first Surah he recited was Surah Al-Fatiha.

It wasn't long before he had perfected his Tilawat, Qirat and voice. But now, not only his family and friends, but people from faraway towns flocked to see him practicing in his capsule. He had to fit a microphone inside his capsule and a pair of speakers outside so that everyone could hear him.

Years later, he was the first astronaut Qari . . . this time in real and not just sort of. Someone asked him how he had perfected his voice and what drove him to his ambition of reciting Quran-e-Karim in space; he answered, "It was because Allah تبارك وتعالى gave me the guidance to respect my elders and to take care of the younger ones."



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Colourless Tiger

Once upon a time, there was a colourless tiger. All his shades were greys, blacks and whites. So much so, that he seemed like something out of a cheap black and white book. His lack of colour had made him so famous that the world's greatest painters had come to his zoo to try to put some colour on him. None of them succeeded, as the colours would always just drip down off his skin.

Then along came Bhoola the crazy painter. He was a strange guy who travelled all about, happily painting with his brush. Well, it would be more accurate to say that he moved his brush about, as if to paint; because he never put any paint on his brush, and neither did he use canvas or paper. He painted the air, and that's why they called him Bhoola. So, when he said he wanted to paint the colourless tiger, everyone had a good laugh.

When entering the tiger's cage he began whispering in the animal's ear, and moving his dry brush up and down the tiger's body. And to everyone's surprise, the tiger's skin started to take on colour, and these were the most vivid colours any tiger had ever had. Bhoola spent a long time whispering to the animal, and making slight adjustments to his painting. The result was truly beautiful.

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Everyone wanted to know what the painter's secret was. He explained to them that his brush was only good for painting real life, and that to do that he needed no colours. He had managed to paint the tiger using a phrase he kept whispering in its ear: "In just a few days you will be free again, you shall see."

And seeing how sad the tiger had been in his captivity, and how joyful the tiger now seemed at the prospect of freedom, the zoo authorities transported him to the forest and set him free, where never again would he lose his colour.

Animals also have rights; it would not feel good if your parents or teachers keep you in a jail. Since animals can't express their feelings we should take special care for them.



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The Happy Sweeper

A loutish kid and his mates were visiting a theme park. They arrived very early and everything was empty and clean. A park cleaner came by, smiling and laughing as he swept. As everything was already so clean, the group of friends found it amusing to see how the cleaner worked so joyfully, and so early in the morning. They had a great time making fun of him. But the cleaner didn't mind, and just kept sweeping the area clean.

So the gang started throwing bags and bits of paper on the ground, 'to give him something to do'. When more visitors started arriving, and saw the lout and his friends throwing litter about, they thought it was one of the park's fun activities. So they joined in, and as more people arrived, the park became covered in rubbish. The park cleaner couldn't cope. No one seemed to be bothered, but something strange started happening.

As time went on, the park attractions were emptying, and more people were looking down at the rubbish on the ground. By the end of the day no one was on any of the park rides; they were all standing about, looking at the ground. "Well," said the park authorities, "what's going on here?"

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Well...Everyone was looking for something! It turned out that some time during that day, everyone had dropped something on the ground, but now that it was covered with litter, whenever anyone dropped anything... it was almost impossible to find it!

There was no other solution than have everyone help to clean the park, so they could find their things. Encouraged by the park cleaner, the visitors swept the ground, cracking jokes and being merry all the while. It became so much fun that from that day they created a new activity in the park, in which everyone, armed with brushes and bags, spent a while cleaning, laughing, and having a good time.

We must not put others in trouble because we might fall in the same pit we dig for others. Work is never difficult if we enjoy it and do it diligently.



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Allergic Juggler

Once upon a time there was a good, cheerful juggler who loved to use his tricks to make everyone happy. He was also quite an unusual juggler because he was allergic to a load of different foods. He had to be very careful what he put in his mouth. He was always being invited to parties, and he would always gladly accept, because he always had new tricks and games to try out.

In the beginning, everyone was considerate about his allergies, and they took special care to prepare food that he would be able to eat safely. But as time went on, people tired of having to prepare special foods for him. They began to forget his dietary requirements. After having enjoyed his tricks, people would leave him by himself, and the parties became less enjoyable. Sometimes they didn't even bother to tell him what was in the food, and, more than once, he ended up with a black tongue, a red face, and a very itchy body.

Angry at such lack of consideration, he mixed different chemicals and medicines in the foods and drinks of one grand party where everyone was present. The unique mixtures in different proportions gave everyone a special allergy. Some became allergic to birds or frogs, others to fruit or meat, some to raindrops... And so, each person had to take special care from then on. Whenever people met up to eat or have a party, they ended up having to go to the doctor.

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Ending parties in this way was such a pain that, gradually, people began making an effort to learn what each other's allergies were. Now they would prepare everything carefully, so that they could have a good time together without getting sick. Visits to the doctor decreased, and in less than a year, life in town returned to normal, filled with parties and celebrations, always attended by the juggler, who gave life and joy to the occasion. Even better, now he could stay and enjoy the whole party. No one would have suspected that, in that town, every single person was strongly allergic to something.

Some time later in another grand party where everyone in town was present, without anyone knowing, the juggler put some strong remedy medicines in the foods and drinks that undid the unique allergies. The people had learned well how to be considerate towards others, and how they could enjoy each others' company even better just by making a little effort to adapt to each and every person.

We must also try to be considerate and kind towards others, especially those who are old and weak and those with some different diseases. If we don't then the juggler has some chemicals ready!



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Happy Endings

Tariq was a rich kid who led a very nice, comfortable life, protected from most of the harsh realities of life. One day, Tariq went to buy a best-selling storybook he'd been dying to read. The problem was that he arrived a bit late, just as the copy was being sold to a very poor looking boy. The boy had been saving for months to buy this book. Realising there was no book left for him, Tariq was furious, and started shouting and protesting, demanding that the boy hand his over.

"But why should I give you my book? I arrived before you did and I've paid for it", said the boy.

"Because I'm more important than you! Look at me! I'm rich and you are poor. Don't you see?" Tariq replied.

At that moment, a very distinguished looking man came over to Tariq and offered him another copy, saying,

"Of course, my boy! You have more of a right than him to read this book and enjoy."

Then Tariq, in the most showy and superior way, walked off from the boy and entered his bedroom. When he got comfy in his bed and opened the book he somehow vanished and was somehow teleported into the first page of the book. He realised he had turned into a story character, playing the central role in many stories. And in all those stories

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Tariq started out with a lot of bad luck: a couple of times his parents disappeared, other times his house burned down and he lost all his money. In some stories he had to travel to countries where he didn't understand the language, in others he had to work straight from childhood, to help support all his brothers and sisters. Sometimes he found himself in a situation where everyone treated him like a fool, or like someone who had no feelings...

In all these stories, Tariq had to struggle terribly to survive and overcome his difficulties. He managed this, even though few people would have given him a hope. All the stories had a happy ending, in which a wise, fortunate, rich, and mysterious character would help Tariq to fulfil his dreams.

When all this came to an end, Tariq found himself back in his bed, feeling pretty shocked. He realised that in real life he had always been fortunate, and had never helped anyone to have a happy ending of their own. He felt terrible, and spent a long time in his bed, crying. Finally, an enormous smile broke over his face, and he left his home trying to find that poor boy. He gave him some more stories to read and enjoy, and asked him to forgive. He was happy because now he knew what he was going to do with his life. He was going to be that helpful person who comes to the aid of less fortunate people. He would be a maker of happy endings!

On his way home, over in the distance he saw the distinguished looking man who had given him his copy of the book. And Tariq realised that that man was the same one who had appeared at the end of all the stories in the book to help him out. The man who helped make happy endings, but don't worry and don't feel envious kids – you can also be the man who makes happy endings!

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The Mountain Climber

Bilal, the mountain climber, was famous for his attempts to climb the big snowy mountain. He had tried it at least thirty times, but had always failed. He began the ascent at a good pace, focusing on the snowy summit, imagining the marvellous view and the sense of freedom up there. But as he went on, and his strength dwindled, his gaze would lower, and more often would he look at his worn out boots. Finally, when the clouds had gathered round him, and he understood that he wouldn't be able to enjoy the view from the summit that day, he would sit down to rest, relieved to be able to start the descent back down to the village, though slightly worried about all the jokes he would have to endure.

On one of these occasions he went up the mountain accompanied by old Noor, the town optician, who bore witness to the failure. It was Noor who most encouraged Bilal to try again, and he presented him with a pair of special sunglasses.

"If it starts clouding over, put these glasses on, or if your feet start hurting put them on too. These are special glasses; they'll help you."

Bilal accepted the gift without giving it much mind, but when his feet started hurting again he remembered what Noor had said, and he put on the glasses. The pain was pretty bad, but with those new sunglasses he could still manage to see the snow-covered summit; so on he continued.

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Just as nearly always seemed to happen, misfortune returned in the form of cloud cover. But this time it was so light that he could still see the summit through the clouds. So Bilal kept climbing, leaving the clouds behind, forgetting his pain, and finally arriving at the summit. It was certainly worth it. His feeling of triumph was incomparable; almost as magnificent as that wonderful view, resplendent in its silence, the mountain below surrounded by a dense sea of clouds. Bilal didn't remember the clouds being as thick as that, so he looked more closely at the sunglasses, and understood everything.

Noor had engraved a light image on the lenses, in the form of the snow-covered summit. It was made in such a way that you could only see it if you looked upwards. Noor had understood that whenever Bilal lost sight of his objective, he would similarly lose sight of his dream, and his will to continue would wane.

Bilal realised that the only obstacle to reaching the summit had been his own discouragement. When he could no longer see the top of the mountain, the problems had set in. He thanked Noor for using that little trick to help him see that his aims were not impossible, and that they were still there, where they had always been.



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For the Kingdom

Once upon a time a King ordered his two sons to build two large aqueducts to supply water to his country estates, which were in a very poor state due to a great drought. The first son took part of his father's riches and part of the army. With them he travelled north where he ordered the people of those lands to work hard on building the aqueduct. He oversaw the work very carefully, paying the villagers fairly, and finishing the project within the predicted two years. Proud of his work, he returned to the palace, only to find the place in the midst of celebrations for the coming crowning of his brother as King. He was told that his brother had taken only one year to build his aqueduct in the south, and that he had managed to do the job with hardly any soldiers or money.

This seemed so strange to the first brother that he began to investigate the southern aqueduct. What he found amounted to more than a few irregularities. He returned to the palace, telling his father to avoid this madness of making his brother King

"Why do you say that? Is there something I should know?" asked the King. "You know how much I love my brother, but he must have gone crazy. He has dragged our good name through the gutter. He built his aqueduct deviating from the plans. He created so many outlets that barely half the water arrives at the royal estates. He confronted the prime

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minister in front of the villagers, and he left without paying any of the workers. He even used your soldiers as labourers. And who knows? Maybe that's only the start..."

The King, gazing affectionately at his son, replied.

"My son, what you say is true. Your brother had the initiative to modify the aqueduct to improve it; the wisdom to propose something which would improve the lives of everyone. And so he convinced the villagers to work quickly and without pay. He had the courage to confront the prime minister to defend justice, and the charisma to set his soldiers to work even more hours than the villagers. His commitment was so great that he himself was the one who worked hardest on the project, forgetting his Princely status. You know what, my son? This is why everyone adores your brother, and would do anything he were to ask of them. He is more than their King, he is their leader".

The Prince left, deep in thought. He came to recognise that the words of his father indeed pointed to the greatness of his brother. And without hesitation, he ran to his brother, to congratulate him. We all want to be the captain of the team or the leader of the group or the class representative, but the true leader is one who is capable of leading and taking everyone along by setting himself as the best example.



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The Tea Combat

Different regions of the world have different cultures and ways of living. The people of Indian subcontinent have a special way of serving food to the guests. Similarly, Japanese people have an elaborate and unique tea ceremony. The people who serve tea are especially trained in this art. The Japanese are also famous for the different martial arts including Judo Karate, Samurai warriors and ninjas.

Long time ago there was a tea master, Fun Chang, who was famed for serving the Japanese green tea. People used to flock at his tea room for his cake tea and green tea. The place was specifically popular with the soldiers and martial artists who would go there to relax and remove their physical and mental stress.

One day, a group of samurai warriors went to Fun Chang's tea room to fend off the tiredness after a hard day's practice. One of them was extremely tired and finicky, his looks made Fun Chang confused and he accidentally dropped some hot green tea on him. Ming Tan, the warrior, was already stressed out and was now fuming with anger. He got so angry that he was about to kill Fun Chang with a single blow of his deadly side weapon, the small Ninjato sword. However, his friends controlled him just in time to save poor Chang. Ming was not ready to spare him though and challenged him to meet in a duel the next week.

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Fun Chang was very depressed because he knew he had no chance against Ming Tan. Ming Tan, on the other hand was also not feeling comfortable. His friends knocked some sense into him saying that Fun Chang was a famous tea master with many different martial artists visiting and befriending him; they would most certainly teach and mentor Chang about some lethal moves that could jeopardize Ming's career and even his life. But Ming had already issued the challenge and he would become the joke of Japan if he surrendered to a tea master.

Fun Chang went to his friend and famous Samurai sensei, Wang Shi. He told him the whole situation narrating everything from what happened and how it transpired into a duel challenge. Wang Shi was a wise and cool headed fighter who did not jump to decision without thinking hard, however, he never thought long. He told Chang to come the next day before the dawn breaks.

Chang left his home the next day even before the first crow woke up, but he was not alone. Chang never realized that someone was following him. Ming knew that Chang never got up this early; he also knew that Chang would go and seek help from a professional martial artist. Chang slowly knocked on Wang Shi's door and was silently ushered inside. Ming Tan was now very perplexed; he knew that with even a day's training with an expert like Wang he stood no chance against Chang. He peeped inside and saw that Wang Shi was training Fun Chang how to kill with a single and powerful blow of a heavy sword. When he saw this he once again felt relaxed because he knew that Chang could not learn to use a heavy sword in a week nor would he develop enough strength in a week to use a heavy sword.

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The next morning Ming Tan again felt curious and followed Chang to Wang Shi's home. This time when he spied he saw Wang train Chang with a heavier sword. This made him panic a little because this could only mean two things: Either Wang Shi was very stupid to train Fun Chang with such a heavy sword, which he knew Wang wasn't; or Chang was learning at an amazingly quick speed.

This continued for the whole week; Ming Tan would follow Fun Chang everyday and spy Wang Shi training him, each time with a heavier sword. Ming had by now decided that Wang wanted Chang to finish him off with one extremely heavy and fatal blow. He therefore, decided his strategy to buy the heaviest sword available in Okinawa and use that to outdo his rival in the duel.

When the day of the duel finally came, Chang was led to the pavilion by Wang Shi. He advised Fun Chang to remain calm. On the other side, Ming Tan entered the ground after getting a lot of exercise to build his stamina to use the heaviest sword he could lay his hands on. Too much exercise for a week had worn down Ming and he looked a bit tired. When the fight finally started both the rivals stood face to face.

By the time Ming could take out his heavy sword Chang had already pulled out a Ninjato sword from the sheath and hit Ming Tan. Not only was Ming injured badly both physically and mentally for losing the duel. He learned his lesson not to be hot tempered and never to underestimate anyone.

What had actually happened was that Wang Shi knew Ming would try to find out his opponent's strategy and so he asked Chang to get up early and come to him. He made Chang practice with a heavy sword for

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fifteen minutes and when Ming would go away he let him sleep soundly. Once Fun Chang had a good sleep he would wake him up and train him to use a Ninjato sword effectively and quickly.

The story gives us a few lessons to learn. Remember that curiosity killed the cat and that we should never make decisions in anger and haste. We should also not belittle anyone and always work diligently. Dear young friends, what is cooked by anger burns in hell.



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Short Stories of Kings

Bounds of Vengeance

Once one of the sons of Harun-ur-Rashid went to him and complained that a son of an official had abused him.

Harun-ur-Rashid asked his courtiers as to what punishment did the son of the official deserve?

A courtier suggested that he should be killed. Another suggested that his tongue should be amputated. A third one said that he should be fined and imprisoned.

Harun-ur-Rashid decided and gave his judgement. Addressing his son he said:

“O my son, it would be generous to forgive him. But if you are unable to do so, you may likewise use the same expressions against him as he used against you. But do not exceed the bounds of vengeance for in that case the wrong will be on your side.”

Sheikh Saadi said about this that

“According to the wise, he is not a man

Who contends with a furious elephant

But he is a man in reality,

Who when angry speaks not idle words

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No Other Refuge except God

Once upon a time an old king suffered from a deadly and unknown disease. The herbalists did not know the diagnosis and to save their skins they prescribed that the only remedy was to execute a person possessing certain characteristics.

Orders were immediately issued to search for a person possessing the specified characteristics. At last a young boy possessing such characteristics was found.

He happened to be an orphan and the selfish guardians were offered a heavy amount if they agreed and punishment of death if they did not.

The Qazi gave the fatwa that in order to save the life of the king it was lawful that a person who was a subject of the king to be killed.

The boy was brought to the king and he ordered the executioner to kill him so that he could recover. When the executioner was ready to slay the boy he looked up to at the sky and smiled.

The king did not find this amusing and asked the boy the reason to smile at such an odd occasion.

The boy said: "I have smiled because I have seen that greed and fear have overcome the affection of my guardians. I have smiled because I have seen the Qazi sell justice in return for his life and money. Under these circumstances I have no option but to look to Allah ﷻ, the refuge for those who have no refuge."

At these words, the king was out to the quick. Tears rushed to his eyes and he said "it is better for me to die than to shed innocent blood." He let the boy go home and he gave him a lot of money. Surprisingly enough the king also recovered from the deadly disease.

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Short Stories of Ministers

Vengeance for Grudge

The servant of a king fled. Some men were sent in pursuit. They brought him back.

A minister of the king bore some grudge against the servant. He suggested that he should be killed to make an example out of him for others.

The servant addressing the king said:

“Whatever befalls me with your approbation is lawful for what plea can the slave advance: it is for the master to pronounce the sentence. But having been nourished by the bounty of your dynasty I loathe that on the day of Resurrection you should be punished for having shed my blood. But if you desire to kill me do so according to the provision of law.”

The king enquired as to how he could kill him lawfully.

He said: “Allow me to kill this minister who bears a grudge against me so that his grudge becomes a truth and then you may take my life as a punishment for killing someone.”

The king smiled, and asked minister what he thought of the matter.

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The Minister said: "My lord! Free this man otherwise the blood of two people will be on your hands."

Grateful Minister

A king had a minister who was intelligent, kindhearted and good-natured. Once the king got annoyed with him and imprisoned him.

The king of a neighbouring kingdom sent the minister a secret message that the king of his country not knowing his merits had dishonoured him. He offered him wealth and honour in return of joining his government to defeat the cruel king.

The minister wrote his reply on the back of the letter and returned it to the messenger.

Some one reported to the king that the minister was in secret correspondence with the king of another country.

Under the orders of the king the courier was overtaken and made to produce the letter.

On the back of the letter, the Minister had written:

"Your good opinion is more than what I deserve. I am grateful for your offer, but I am unable to accept it because having been nourished by the bounty of the king of my country I cannot be ungrateful to my benefactor if there is a slight change in his sentiments,

He who bestows every moment favours on your

Is to be pardoned if once in life he injures you"

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Reading this letter, the king was very much impressed with the qualities of the minister. He restored the Minister to his office and accepted his mistake.

The minister said: "My Lord it was the decree of God that a misfortune should befall me, and it was best that it should come from your hands which had formerly bestowed favours on me."



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Short Stories (Part-6)

Sounds of Silence

Four priests decided to meditate silently without speaking for two weeks. By nightfall on the first day, the candle began to flicker and then went out. The first priest said, "Oh, no! The candle is out." The second one said, "Are we not supposed to keep quiet?" The third priest said, "Why must you two break the silence?" The fourth one laughed loudly and in a victorious tone exclaimed vociferously, "Ha! I am the only one who didn't speak."

Each priest broke the silence for a different reason, each of which is a common stumbling block to the road to success. The first one became distracted by one element of the world (the candle) and so lost sight of the rest. The second was so worried about the rules that he himself made the same mistake. The third priest was more concerned about others than himself. And the final monk was lost in his ego.

Chasing Two Rabbits

A martial arts student approached his teacher with a question. "I would like to improve my knowledge of the martial arts and become the best. In addition to learning from you, I'd like to study with another teacher in order to learn another style. What do you think of this idea?"

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"The hunter who chases two rabbits," answered the master, "catches neither one."

The Acting Monkeys

A prince had some monkeys trained to act funny. Being naturally great mimics of men's actions, they showed themselves most apt pupils, and when arrayed in their rich clothes and masks, they acted as well as any of the courtiers. The spectacle was often repeated with great applause, till on one occasion a courtier, bent on mischief, took from his pocket a handful of nuts and threw them upon the stage. The monkeys at the sight of the nuts forgot their act and became (as indeed they were) monkeys instead of actors. Pulling off their masks and tearing their robes, they fought with one another for the nuts. The drama thus came to an end amidst the laughter and ridicule of the audience.

Not everything you see is what it appears to be.



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The Return

Regrets! The time has passed. Now I can only regret on what has transpired. This darkness and loneliness are my only friends and there is no escape.

The first night in grave is so dark and scary, and now this is my fate. If only I had not spent my life in deception! I also have regrets for my parents who had an elaborate plan for such a short life. They arranged eighteen years of specialized studies for my short live. But for this eternal life and its very first night, nothing!

I headed for U.K to specialize after my M.B.B.S. But when I saw the attraction of that place I forgot everything else. I did not turn back to look. I even forgot the love and affection my parents had for me. They wanted me to return and get married; they had got me engaged in Pakistan. But I drowned all their love in the lights of the West.

I did not realise that I was losing my time. That life would desert me, that I was in a great deception, that I was only running after a mirage, and that all of this would end one day. I had just finished my office, and was coming home in my car. I was hypnotised by my successes. I was blinded by the lights of the city I could not see anything else. I had lost my consciousness, and I lost my breathe even before I could be taken to the hospital.

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My dead body reached Pakistan. My parents had never thought that I would die one day. My would-be wife was widowed even before the marriage she had dreamed and longed for. If only my parents knew this would happen they would have never sent me to U.K. But no one can change something that has happened with a 'should have happened like this'. But a far greater mistake they made was, and if they ever realise this they will regret it the most; is that why did they dream of things that were just castles in the air, the like castles made of sand that slip into the sea eventually. Why did they plan for a life that is so deceiving? All they did was to build a spider's web that one weak gush of wind blew away; just one weak gush of wind destroyed it all!

Now I don't even have tears to wash away the blackness of my deeds, the deeds that could have been done away with a single true drop of tear filled with regret and a wholehearted repentance.

I can remember the time when I was young. Whenever there was an electricity shutdown at night I always felt my heart in my throat, and when my parents lit the candle I felt as if I got a new lease of life. But now not even a single ray of light can make its way into my grave. And this grave keeps getting narrower, and with each passing moment I feel myself choking. It was the light that I loved most in my life, and now I don't have it! It was the darkness that I dreaded most, and now it is my only companion in the grave!

Regrets! Only regrets! I wish I had done at least something worthwhile, only one deed that could save me, that could light up this dark grave, the dark grave that is killing this already dead man! Now it is me and in front of me is the life that will never end. If only I knew, I would have done something for this life after life, this never-ending life!

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All those who are able to read this, please start preparing for this life, and warn as many people as you can. Otherwise, God forbid they too will be regretting their past life, a life that is full of deception. Don't be empty-handed when you return to the true life, when you leave this house of deception and embrace the real home, the grave.



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Punishment of Death-1

Albert was whisked away by the police in a jiffy. He could not even make sense of what had transpired. All he knew was that as soon as he reached home the police came and told him that someone was allegedly murdered and he was not the prime suspect but the only suspect. The only sentence that kept hammering his mind was, "You have the right to remain silent."

No interrogation, no recording of his statement, absolutely nothing. He was confined in the lockup for three days. And on the fourth day he was told that, "You'll be heading to the court today and most probably to the gallows in a few weeks."

The jailor was right, and something was quite wrong. The proceedings started and he was briefed, "Your neighbour upstairs Mr. Watson; that is, your friend and the owner of the rented flat you live in; was murdered and his safe emptied four days ago. A priceless ancient necklace and other things were stolen. According to the facts, statements and evidences you were also his best friend. You are jobless for the past two months since the circus you worked in liquidated, and you are hard-pressed for money, you knew the combination of the safe of the deceased Mr. Watson. You also had a big fight with him last week during a rugby match when you lost a bet. You owed him two months rent already. The

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crime scene had no entrance as all the doors were locked from inside, only a window; and you are the only person who could climb in from it. Do you have anything to say in defense? Anything you say may be used against you.”

Now Albert came to know what was going on. He said, “Yes I worked as a wall climber in the circus. I would like to inform the honoured court that I was not present at the scene of the crime. My friend Frank, sitting over there had given me a call me that day and asked me to meet at the Bayswater Point State Park. I had taken the long route of Mott avenue as the other roads had a heavy load of traffic. But I waited there for two hours. Frank did not turn up and I left for home. When I reached home the police officials arrived within two minutes and I think after five more minutes they arrested me.”

The prosecution called the first witness, “Frank would you like to say something?”

Frank came to the witness box and said, “Your Honour, I sincerely believe that Albert has not murdered Mr. Watson. He is very peaceful and a bit of a coward. I can assure you that he fears handling guns, let alone committing a cold-blooded murder.”

“But what about the call, Mr Frank?”

“Well - - - Uh - - - I was doing my job in the radio station at that time. In fact, I was busy that whole day hosting the International Students’ Day. I think there is some sort of a misunderstanding over here.”

“Thank you Mr. Frank. Your honour now I would like to call Mrs. Albert.”

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“Yes Mrs. Albert, would you like to tell us your whereabouts on that fateful day?”

“Well your honour, Albert couldn't have done it, I am sure of it. You see I had left Albert sleeping as he had not slept the night before, you see he is insomniac. He told me the previous night to go to the pawn shop to sell a few things, we are really hard-pressed.”

“And Mrs. Albert, when did you return back?”

“Well I came back after all this had happened. I was supposed to be home three hours earlier but then I met an old friend and got late, she took me to her home.” “Who was this friend?”

“Well she was my class fellow, Maurice.”

“Do you have anything to add?”

“No that's all.”

“Your honour, Maurice has submitted a written statement that she got a call from Mr. Albert to meet his wife at Dicken's pawn shop at 9:45 a.m. There is no evidence that Mr. Albert was not present at the crime scene, on the contrary a hook that wall climbers use in the circus was found at the crime scene. Police officials got a phone call at 9:47 a.m. on 911 that someone is climbing in through the window of Mr. Watson. According to the expert estimate, the time calculation and other evidences are enough to prove that Mr. Albert has committed the crime. Also the fact that no one in that area could confirm seeing Mr. Albert come home.”



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Punishment of Death - 2

Albert was shocked, so were his wife and Frank. But that didn't stop the jury from announcing the verdict that Albert was the murderer and he should be sentenced to death through lethal injection after three weeks, as in New York's law. The judge agreed with the jury making Mrs. Albert scream and faint.

The voice of the jailor kept humming in his head, "- - - probably to the gallows in a few weeks."

However, Albert accepted the fate with open arms. When his wife came to meet him, he said, "Don't worry dear, I know I am innocent and God is just. I'll get justice, if not here then surely after I am dead."

When Frank came to meet Albert, and got the same reply he got furious. "What! Listen man, justice has already been served, and you are at the wrong end of it all. People don't like my shows; they say I talk crap and nonsensical musings. I wonder what they'll say when they hear you." But Albert was very relaxed almost cheerful. He said, "Listen Frankie, I think I know who did this. Would you do me a favour, just make this stupid announcement a day before I am to be punished." Frank was astonished to hear some more nonsensical stuff but reluctantly agreed.

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John was listening to his radio set in the hotel room. It was expensive to stay in the hotel, but he thought, "I can afford luxuries once in a while, especially after the last business I've conducted." He grinned. Good Morning New York wasn't a great show to listen to but the host was his common friend, once upon a time long ago.

The announcer said, "Today a strange news bit for all the listeners. It's a grim morning and I'm blue. A man who'll be dead by tomorrow has ordered a lavish last supper with steaks, soups, chicken, eggs, and JazaaulMaut." John ordered the same meal in his room, "I want to join this guy in his last happy moment of life" he thought to himself. The waiter said, "Sir your order is taken but we don't have this JazaaulMaut on our menu." John was infuriated, "Go get it or I'll show you what I can do!"

"Sir we positively don't have it on our menu and our chef has never heard of it."

"Okay, go get some fruit for me then. Wait, get some water melon."

After serving the dinner as he was leaving the waiter turned and said from the corner of the door, "By the way Sir, JazaaulMaut is Arabic and means punishment of death!"

John was taken aback. He soon forgot and ate the whole dinner. But something was going wrong; the eggs and watermelon had reacted, a disaster recipe for food poisoning!

John was sweating and dizzy, he felt the room whirling. A knock! Who could this be? May be the police have taken clues from "Good Morning New York" or may be that fiendish waiter got suspicious and

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called in the police. The knocks were growing louder; he checked the necklace and bullions in his inside pocket, "I think I can manage to get away through this window before they break in."

He opened his eyes only to find himself on the hospital bed surrounded by the hotel staff, police - - - and Albert! John was busted. "That waiter must have told you! Frankie's too clever I'll get him the next time! - - -"

"No, we don't take help from dumb people like Frankie, you fell down from the window of hotel's room and the hotel staff got you here in the hospital. And the doctors found the loot when they started treating you. Clever boy, John! You called Albert and Maurice, you called us too. You're too good in mimicking. Good thing Albert suspected you. It was your insecurity after the crime that got you caught in the web. But why did you do it? The inspector asked.

"Simple, 'cause Albert was better in wall climbing and the circus kicked me out. So first I got the circus closed and then - - - I almost got Albert!"

"Now we've got you John, and you'll get that thing - - - what was it - - - JazaaulMaut."



Weapons of Mice Destruction – 1

Three blind mice ran and ran till the farmer's wife cut off their tails with a carving knife. That was it! No more running around. But this is the story of the past, nowadays mice are not so tame and do not listen to people. Hence people start great armed expeditions to finish off these anti-state elements. My story is not very different too.

It was two years ago in 2007. We were celebrating Ramazan with great religious fervour and zeal. Everything was going just fine and we had divine help all month long that saved us from sins like cursing the KESC for electricity breakdowns and the likes of that. However, Satan is the biggest enemy of Humans, and we being among humans were subject to his ire. The script of the drama called "Life" progressed something like this:

Satan was fuming in anger at the peaceful way in which we conducted ourselves during Ramazan and was planning like a cunning "Vulpes Vulpes". Finally he schemed a "Great Game". One night after the prayers the whole family went to sleep: My brother, his wife and kid in their room, my parents in their room, and I and my sister in our own rooms. I lay on my bed trying to sleep and my sister rested on her bed and slept without any further delays. I could not sleep as I had got a book as a gift from someone and I could not help but read it till the end.

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As soon as I finished the book, I got up and went to the washroom to brush my teeth. I do not have a washroom and so have to cross the dining room. When I was passing the dining room I had some ruffling noise from the kitchen, it seemed as if something stepped on the newspaper. I had two suspects on my mind. The first being a ghost, of which I was not the least bit afraid; in fact I presume it to be the other way round, at least that is what everybody says. The second suspect was the rodent that I abhor and detest. These adjectives may actually be a cover so it may be correct if you read "abhor and detest" between the lines as "am afraid of".

I came back from the washroom only to hear that ruffling sound again. This time I got a lump in my throat and woke up my daddy. We waited in the dining room for a few minutes, picketing on the dining table waiting for the suspect. But since no one emerged, I was charged guilty of brewing a storm in a teacup and let off with a warning.

I lay back on my bed this time trying to stay awake and be ready for the culprit. But soon sleep got the better of me and just as I closed my eyes, I heard the sound of the newspaper again. This time it seemed pretty close to my bed. I woke up with a start only to find a newspaper near my bed, and to keep my heart at peace I assured myself that it must have been the fan's wind.

The next time wasn't so lucky. As soon as I closed my eyes, I felt something dash over my left arm. That was it! I screamed at the top of my voice, "Mouse! Mouse! Daddy, Ammi, Tomcat, cat, terminator, exterminator; Oh anyone come help me. Heeeeeellllllllpppppp!"

But my sister wasn't moving, I hate mice because they are filthy but she is dead scared of them. I went over to her and with both hands gave her a huge jolt. She opened up her eyes and said, "What is the problem with you?" I said, "There is a mouse in the bedroom!"

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Weapons of Mice Destruction - 2

She screamed, "Aaahhhhhhhhhhh!" And ran out of the room straight to my parent's room and resumed her sleep again. But for the rest of us there was no rest. Ammi had fired all the stoves to the maximum and started boiling water, daddy was spraying all the cans of pesticides that he could lay his hands on, me and my brother and sister-in-law had hockey sticks and cricket bats and other weapons of mice destruction in our hands waiting for the not-so-unsuspecting prey.

The miniature monster would try to sneak out of the room every few minutes to let loose the terror in other parts of the country, we were untrained and ill-armed but determined to save our countrymen. This is why the mouse failed in its attempt.

All this happened approximately at midnight. And in our numerous attempts to kill the Midnight Stalker we failed. The whole room had to be cleared of all the rubble (read: all the stuff) in the course of our actions. Finally, it was decided to seal the room for any trespassing without orders from the relevant authorities. The door was closed and sealed with newspaper packings, and reinforced with duct tapes to ensure that the mouse would not be able to escape.

By the time the suspect had been limited in its freedom it was already time for us to have our Sehri. We did not sleep the whole night

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and were dead tired. None of us was able to perform the routine chores amicably. In the afternoon we got some rat poison and mouse traps, used them with cheese and tomatoes. The traps were set in the strategic highways of my bedroom in the presence of security officials. For the next four days I lived like the internally displaced refugees, sleeping and sitting in other people's bedroom.

After four days of intensive watching and high profile security arrangements the mouse was duped into taking the poison and dying a miserable death in the corner of the room. The room was flushed and cleared of all the clues to wipe off the traces of the excesses that we had committed. But I suppose we fell into the trap of Satan and were not to be blamed. Only we, who have gone through the ordeal, know how we lived through those four days of living nightmare.

Later, in an emergency meeting of the cabinet it was decided that any future attempts by mice to intrude, hold the nation hostage and radiate anarchy in our country; would be dealt with severely. In the meeting I put forward the view that since the border incursion had occurred not once but twice (this was the second time, the first time was a different case that will be discussed separately), it would be most appropriate to beef up the security at the borders (read: washrooms, drain holes and main doors). A consensus decision was taken to close the main doors as quickly as possible, install netting, put bottles filled with water in every washroom hole (remove it for using toilet and replace it after every use) and drain hole to stop illegal crossing of borders.

Thus all was settled and as they say "All is well that ends well".



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The Case of Broken Eggs

It is said that an empty mind is the devil's workshop. One day, when mom was away a sudden urge to be the world's greatest chef struck me. I shared that idea with my brother, Mohsin and he innocently wished to be my partner in crime. I reminded him that the journey of a thousand mile begins with a single step and so we agreed to begin the journey that very moment.

We debated on what can be the first dish to be cooked by a great cook. The discussion was concluded on omelette. We collected the ingredients and crashed the first egg into the pan and waited for something to happen, but we realized later that the stove does not understand the art of cooking without fire. We added some rose syrup but the egg started to bubble up and we felt that it was darkening a bit.

I mentioned this to Mohsin and we reached our second conclusion that the world is still not ready to replace oil with syrup. We added a cup of lemon juice to make the omelette sweet and sour but the sudden increase in smoke made it difficult for us to keep this journey to the heights of cooking hidden any more. So we put out the fire, threw the pan into the wash basin and ran to save our skins as we had already foreseen that a sound punishment was just round the corner. It is very hard for

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normal people to understand the genius. Anyway even Einstein failed in his school years not because he did not know, but because for a genius school only limits the potential of mind and thought. Perhaps an omelette cannot withstand the spirit of creativity in the mind of the greatest cook ever. At the end of the day we had three broken eggs; the first one was lying in the wastebin, the other was bandaged on Mohsin's head and the third was sitting in front of the computer sharing his experiences with the world.



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Bow Down and save yourself

In the forests of Changa Manga in Pakistan there was a very large oak tree surrounded by some Reeds. The oak always taunted the Reeds because they were thin and weak. It used to boast, "Who can be stronger than me? There is not a single being in this jungle that is as strong as me, not even a tiger!"

The winds that blew in the forest used to whisper, "We know a very strong storm wind that can root this bully oak off." One day the large oak was uprooted by the storm wind and thrown across a stream. The storm wind did not like proud beings. It fell among the Reeds, which it thus addressed: "I wonder how you, who are so light and weak, are not entirely crushed by this strong wind." They replied, "You fight and contend with the wind, and consequently you are destroyed; while we on the contrary bend before the least breath of air, and therefore remain unbroken, and escape."

You must have noticed that when climbing the stairs you will be quicker and less exhausted if you bend forward. If you remain upright then you will feel more exhausted and you will take more time to climb.

The very large oak tree was proud and thought that it was very powerful, so the wind was sent to punish it. The Reeds were humble and

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thus saved. As it is said, "Pride comes before a fall." Also if you are an idol worshipper there is a chance that you realize your mistake, but when you are proud you think of yourself as the greatest and the best. It equates to the fact that you worship yourself subconsciously even if you physically worship One God or idols, those who worship themselves seldom have a chance to realize their mistakes like the Egyptian Pharaoh.



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Cycle of Evil

There was once a king who was so cruel and unjust that his subject yearned for his death or dethronement. However, one day he surprised them all by announcing that he had decided to turn over a new leaf.

“No more cruelty, no more injustice,” he promised, and he was as good as his words. He became known as the ‘Gentle Monarch’.

Months after his transformation one of his ministers plucked up enough courage to ask him what had brought about his change of heart, and the king answered:

“As I was galloping through my forests I caught sight of a fox being chased by a hound. The fox escaped into his hole but not before the hound has bitten into its leg and lamed for life. Later I rode into a village and saw the same hound there. It was barking at a man. Even as I watched, the man picked up a huge stone and flung it at the dog, breaking its leg. The man had not gone far when he was kicked by a horse. His knee was shattered and he fell to the ground, disabled for life. The horse began to run but it fell into a hole and broke its leg. Reflecting on all that had happened, I thought: ‘Evil begets evil. If I continue in my evil ways, I will surely be overtaken by evil’. So I decided to change.”



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The Devil Inside

I will tell you a story about my friend as he quoted. He says he can never forget this incident of his life. So here is my friend telling his story:

“This is the story of the time when I was not very young but also not very old. Let me tell you about myself first, I am a science student and also a Hafiz. First I did my kindergarten and then Hifz or memorising of Quran Sharif. After that I joined a fast-track school that covered my primary and secondary classes till the 8th grade. Now I am a science graduate and doing my Masters.

“This is the incident when I joined a new school after my 8th grade, for finishing my secondary school 9th and 10th grade that the government recognized. Pakistanis will know that I am talking about matriculation.

“I was considered a well-behaved and good-at-studies nerd type of student. This was because I was two years older than the rest of the classmates so I never got really frank with them, and also because I really was good at studies.

“One day, we were in the chemistry laboratory for a practical working on how to produce oxygen. The teacher was in the middle of two

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groups with the apparatus. I was at the front and by my side was the naughty kid of the class, Khalid. When my teacher was explaining the whole process everybody was absorbed in the lecture even that naughty kid. It suddenly occurred to me that if I do something mischievous now, I could get away with it. And so it was, I threw a little water on a boy of the other group, who also happened to be the hining kid of the class, Ameen.

“Ameen was shocked; he knew the water came from my direction. But he was not sure because by that time I had hidden the devilish smile under the carpet of innocence. His next target was Khalid, he was so dead sure that it was Khalid. And his anger burst out, he - - - he emptied a whole distilled water bottle on Khalid.

“Now Khalid was naughty, but he was also angry. Because he saw no reason for this sudden outburst by Ameen, he also took revenge in the same exchange i.e. Distilled water bottle. In no time the chemistry lab presented a picture of battleground; from pipettes, magnesium to solutions, everything was being thrown in random order. In fact it was more like a civil war situation.

“In the end there were two scenes worth looking. One was the chemistry lab, as if a great experiment had gone wrong and a nuclear disaster had struck. The second, all the kids of 9th grade were kneeled down in the hot sun with hands up in the air. The funny thing was that when the principal saw me in them, he said, ‘Ahsan you can go I know you had nothing to do with it. In fact the lab assistant has told me you went out of the lab when you saw all this.’ I was glad to hear this, but deep down I know I was the only one to blame, and so I admit it now.



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Black And Blue Kid

I used to be hyperactive and adventurous kid. Most of my class fellows and friends would come to me either with a daring challenge or for some adventure type situation.

Once I had to go to some wedding invitations with my parents. There were many of my mates there as well. I was wearing a brand new clothe especially brought for the occasion. I and all my chums were playing with a ball the elders had arranged to keep us busy. The wedding was in the community centre. We were playing football and other games with the ball, and had wrecked havoc inside so all of us were first made to sit down silently. But in that age we could hardly sit down for five minutes, so we were allowed to play again but outside near the basketball court. Since the ball was always going out of the premises, it was decided that whoever is the culprit will retrieve the ball.

The game was going on nicely, but as I told you I was the most hyperactive of the kids. I kicked the ball so hard it went flying out of our area. Nobody could spot the ball and I was told to find and bring it back. After a long search I found the ball in the middle of the - - - swimming pool. As I didn't want any delay in our game I dived in and got the ball back. But what I didn't realize was that I had ruined my new Shalwar and

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Sherwani. However, when this fact dawned on me, gloom settled in at the thought of facing my parents in this condition of a drenched towel.

What I did was, I hid behind some bushes to save myself from the scolding of my dear mother and the heavy hands of my most respected father. After the wedding when no one could find me, and all my friends keeping mum to save me, many hunting parties were set off in different directions of the community centres. My dad being my dad and clever as he is, knows me very well. He traced me out with the help of my wet footprints and excellent lighting arrangements, among the bushes I had disappeared in.

Although I was saved from the beating that seemed so eminent, thanks to the mediation efforts of my dad's friends. I was not spared of the scolding and grounding for the longest week of my life. My friends who had kept themselves silent were very lucky to get away with some scolding. But little did my father's friends know that I learned to recognize the blue and black colours at home that night, and I will never forget for the rest of my life, these colours and the way I could feel them for almost a month.



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Counting the Waves - 1

Once upon a time in a faraway land there was a king who was very kind and just. He was very considerate for his people. Also in his kingdom was a government official who was famous for his bribe. The king received many complaints about him and so he used to transfer him from one department to another as soon as he got a complaint. But the king never kicked him out of the job because he was kind and considerate and let him off every time because of the corrupt official's wife and kids...

However, the corrupt official was now very confident that no matter what he does the king won't fire him. This made him even more brave and relentless. He started fleecing and blackmailing people all the more. In fact now his complaints were sent more often than ever before.

Now the last complaint that the king received was of a very grave nature. The corrupt official had asked a foreigner to give ten hundred thousand gold coins to allow him back to his native country. A person who saw the whole affair going on went and complained the king.

So the king looked into the matter himself. He ordered the release of the foreigner and personally said sorry to him, he gave him valuable gifts and sent him to the native country with his own royal army.

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The corrupt official was brought to the king's court. The charges were read out aloud in front of everyone. Then the king said, "Do you have anything to say in your defence?"

The official replied, "Your highness I am guilty. I have put you to shame time and again, I have failed you each time. I confess. But your majesty, I appeal. I appeal to you to keep in consideration my conditions. I appeal for mercy your Lordship. You are most aware of my family situation. I am the lone bread earner of my family. I have eleven sons whom I intend to train for cricket team, I have seven daughters all of them are unmarried. I have a wife whose demand and shopping is rising with the rise in inflation. Your majesty, I also have to look after my in-laws, none of them are employed. Your highness, you are free and right in punishing me the way you want, but I plead and beg for your mercy that as we all know supersedes your anger."

The king asked his ministers, "What is your opinion?"

They all said simultaneously, "Your highness! He is getting out of control; he should be dealt with severely."



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Counting the Waves - 2

The king then turned to the official and said, "I have had enough of you! You worked in every single government post in my kingdom, and you put each of these highly dignified positions to shame! I cannot bear this any longer. But since you have begged for mercy I give you a lean punishment. From now on you will not be transferred to any other position; you will not be given any promotions. From now on your job is to sit in front of the sea and count the waves. There is no chance of you indulging in bribery in this job."

The official cried, "Your highness, thank you! Thank you for your kindness and mercy! I will not let you down."

So the next day the official was sitting by the seaside with a thick register noting the time and number of waves. For three days it went on like this.

But on the forth day the official could not control himself any longer. While he was counting the waves he saw a fisherman pass by. He called him, "Come here you thief!"

The fisherman got confused he had done nothing wrong. He said, "O Sire! What is my fault? I am just a poor fisherman."

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The official said, "Yes I know you people very well, you thief! For the past three days I have counted twenty-three waves at this time. Today there are only fifteen and you are the only person present here. You have stolen eight precious waves from the kingdom of His highness. I am going to arrest you for this crime!"

The fisherman pleaded, "No sire! Please let me go, I am innocent."

"You have no proof. All right, since you are poor and probably the only one who earns in the family I sympathize with you. Let us make a deal. You pay me ten gold coins for each wave, that is the official rate, and I will let you go."

"But sire, I am very poor and I cannot pay eighty gold coins. Please have mercy!"

The corrupt official saw his chance, "Okay! Pay me fifty gold coins and I won't tell anyone."

As if this was not enough he even started fleecing the boats and ships that sailed pass him saying, "I am sitting here performing the duties assigned to me by His Highness and you people pass by without seeking permission. You will have to pay a heavy fine or your vessel will be seized."

When the king came to know about the things happening at the seashore he called the corrupt official and banned him for life from working. The king said, "It is proved today from your misdeeds that old habits die hard, and those who want to mint money can do so even by counting waves."



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Early to Bed ...

There occur certain incidents in ones life, which imprints irremovable marks on ones mind. Such incidents always teach us a serious lesson. I relate such an incident from my life.

Before coming to the whole scenario I want to tell you about one of my bad habits that I am always a late night sleeper. I used to play games on computer till late night and my mom continuously forbade me but I always turn a deaf ear to her advice.

Sir Danish the chemistry teacher was known for his temper that shot up further if anyone played around with the discipline of the class.

On that unlucky day my chemistry class was going on and I remembered nothing.

"Wake up!" I was sleeping soundly when I heard those words "not now mom it's too early" I said. But mom replied with the hearty laughter in fact the class roared with laughter. I realized a little too late that I was not at my home I had actually snoozed off in my classroom right in the middle of the chemistry lecture. "I am in trouble" I thought. My classmates were amused on my foolishness and laughed heartily at this.

"Silence in the class" Sir Danish shouted. All of a sudden the laughter ceased. "Stand up and tell the whole class what I was teaching". Sir Danish ordered me.

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I spoke up with the speed that defied even the speed of light. Sadly my conversation skills did not make any noise except in my mind, and I stood there speechless. As my silence prolonged Sir Danish patience seemed to have shortened. "So you were sleeping in the class while I was teaching". Sir shouted with anger as my silence only cleared any doubts of me being asleep. "What were you doing last night? Playing games?" asked my teacher tightening the noose around my neck by getting specific.

I wanted to tell him but fear overwhelmed me and all I could do was murmur a few jumbled sentences, which even I could not understand.

"That's it go to the Principal's office I will talk to you there" Sir Danish said I was shocked and so the entire class as no one was expecting such severe punishment. Sir was strict but the Principal was way ahead of him in this department. I gave one final innocent look to my teacher- the look that always melts my parents' heart. But alas! He was not impressed. I left the class with the tears in my eyes but they dared not flow. What happened next is not only unforgettable but also unprintable.

So dear kids! It is in your best interest to sleep early and study hard because if you do that then you will understand the meaning of "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."



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Choices in Life

Sufyan was the kind of guy you love to hate. He was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twins!"

He was a unique manager because he had several waiters who had followed him around from restaurant to restaurant. The reason the waiters followed Sufyan was because of his attitude. He was a natural motivator.

If an employee was having a bad day, Sufyan was there telling the employee how to look at the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Sufyan and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?"

Sufyan replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, 'Sufyan, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood.' I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life."

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"Yeah, right, but it is not that easy." I protested.

"Yes, it is," Sufyan said. "Life is all about choices. When you get rid of all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood.

The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life."

I reflected on what Sufyan said. Soon thereafter, I left the restaurant industry to start my own business.

We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it. Several years later, I heard that Sufyan did something you are never supposed to do in a restaurant business: he left the back door open one morning and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers.

While trying to open the safe, his hand, shaking from nervousness, slipped off the combination.

The robbers panicked and shot him. Luckily, Sufyan was found relatively quickly and rushed to the local trauma center. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Sufyan was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body.

I saw Sufyan about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Want to see my scars?"

I declined to see his wounds, but did ask him what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place.

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"The first thing that crossed my mind was that I should have locked the back door," Sufyan replied. "Then, as I was lying on the floor, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked.

Sufyan continued, "...the paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the Emergency Room and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I could read, 'he is going to die.' I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Sufyan.

"He asked if I was allergic to anything.'Yes' I replied. The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, 'BULLETS!' Over their laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead!'"

Sufyan lived because it was not time for his death. Thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything.

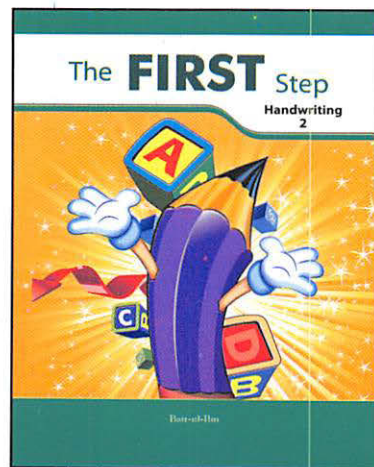
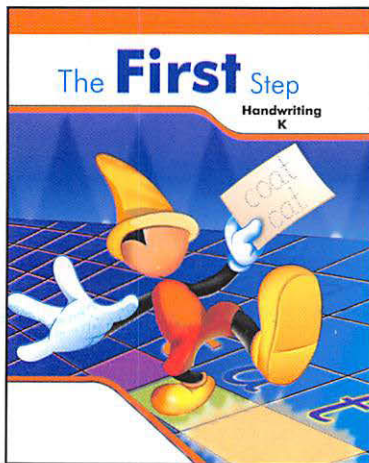


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